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MEN OF THE WORLD, MID HUM AND STIR, RING OF ANVIL AND FRET OF LOOM,
BUILD FOR YOUR THOUGHTS A THOROUGHFARE, KEEP FOR YOUR SOULS A SILENT ROOM.

THE POETRY REVIEW

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VOLUME XXIV

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THE POETRY SOCIETY (INCORPORATED)

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THE POETRY SOCIETY.

FOUNDED FEB. 24, 1909; INCORPORATED JUNE 18, 1923.

THE objects of the Poetry Society, as stated in the Constitution, are to promote, in the words of Matthew Arnold, adopted as a motto, " a clearer, deeper sense of the best in poetry and of the strength and joy to be drawn from it " :

To assert the importance and value of poetry and to encourage the study and use of it, and to establish an active fellowship with a love of poetry as the common bond of union.

To form local centres and reading circles for the convenience of groups of members and to provide other facilities for bringing together lovers of poetry with the objects of extending and developing an intelligent and cultivated interest in and appreciation of poetry, and of encouraging the qualified reading, and vocal interpretation of verse with due regard to emphasis and rhythm and the poet's meaning.

To organise and hold private and public recitals of poetry and lectures on the art and mission of poetry and such public meetings and social gatherings as may come within the scope of the Society.

To organise and promote sub-societies for the production and performance of poetic dramas and for the reading and study of the works of individual poets.

To encourage and organise in schools the study of poetry as an important factor in education and in its relation to and as an influence upon life and character, and to induce educational authorities to include poetry as a definite part of the curriculum in schools, and to promote voluntary school and college centres and provide lectures and readings for schools and other educational institutions.

To hold examinations in the art of reading and speaking verse and to offer medals and certificates in connection therewith, and to devise and give effect to measures for testing and raising the qualifications of teachers of elocution.

To establish lectureships and to publish a journal or magazine designed to express, promote and record the general and specific objects and policy of the Society.

To acquire halls, theatres and lecture rooms and other permanent places of meeting, and to form libraries for the use of members.

To organise and manage festivals, pastoral plays, eisteddfods and other forms of commemorating and celebrating the birth and death days and centenaries of poets and other literary anniversaries.

The ordinary Membership subscription is 10s., with an entrance fee of 2s. 6d. (The Journal of the Society—THE POETRY REVIEW—is supplied to members without further charge ; it is otherwise obtainable at an annual postal subscription of 6s. 6d., or through booksellers and newsagents.)

All communications should be addressed to The General Secretary, The Poetry Society (Inc.), 36 Russell Square, London, W.C.1.

(Telephone and Telegraph: Museum 4491.)

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WALTER DE LA MARE

THERE'S but one ghost on earth !
One grey ghost !
His vision gave it birth
To haunt us most.
His passion made it press
—How frail ! how lone !—
From death's sad consciousness
Into our own :
The ghost of lovely things.
That pass and die,
The loveliness that sings.
The evening sky,
The falling star,
The love that soon must fade,
These haunt us,—for they are
Of death afraid.

K. V. CHEVIS.

GALLIPOLI

PRELUDE

WHAT is this thing you would do?
Would you sing a song?
But why?
Will any man hear you?
Nay, but the gods will hear me,
The old gods of the Beginning,
Of Light and Darkness;
Not man in his grey twilight.
Geb the Earth God,
Nut the Sky God,
Shu the Air,
Ra the Sun,
Rennut the Serpent,
Thoth the Wise,
Hathor and Isis and Osiris;
These shall hear me,
And say, " Come hither,
Child of the Beginning,
Of Light and Darkness.
Tell us of the earth in these days,
Cleave our weariness,
This flicker of night and day
That threatens grey twilight;
For the merging is the end:
When Light and Darkness
Are no more two but one,
That is the end."

So I will sing to them
Of the earth in these days,
Sundering light from darkness.
I will sing to them a song of blood.
Of things I have seen and things I have done I will sing to them,

Cleaving their weariness :
And nothing lost if no man hear me.

A SONG OF BLOOD

Tramping feet in the dusk.
Backward the light
Splendidly dying.
Forward the east and darkness.

All turns to shadow.
On the green fields and the water is thrown a shadow ;
The trees are shadows ;
The carts and the camels and the asses all are shadows,
Gliding by the shadow of a train of men upon the road.
(Dark armed men.)
There is nothing clear but the tramp, tramp, of the feet.
You are in the shadow, tramping feet ;
Your day is past, and the shadows have fallen on you.
But did not the light die splendidly ?
Aye, so !

Stilled is the city.
Stilled to the tramp of the feet
But filled with shadows.
Tramping feet, say good-bye to the city :
Its delights are turned to shadows.

The sun has gone from it.
Nevermore the merry step for you
In its streets and its taverns.
In fair way and foul way,
In gay way and mad way,
In strange way and bad way,
In rare way and great way
You trod,
But now you are set in a strait way.

Ah, but the sun was bright and hot,
The day was good and the ways were good,

The fair and the foul and the gay and the mad,
The rare and the great and the strange and the bad;
All, for nothing is truly evil—
Under the sun.

Say you farewell to the city of delights,
Tramping feet.
Say you farewell to the desert and the camp,
Tramping feet.
Nevermore the camp for you, nevermore the desert,
Nevermore the City of the Pyramids
(How rosily they glowed before the light died!
How sweetly lay the fields
Closed in the desert's tawny arms at evening!)
Tramping feet.

Clank and rumble and rattle of the train
That carries us away.

Throb and quiver and rustle of the ship
That carries us away and away.
Throb and roll and heave of the ship,
Throb and groan and gurgle of the ship
That carries us away and away and away.

Gracious are your hills, O Lemnos,
But we bide not with you.
Longer than a bird on the wing may tarry we bide not with
you,
Deep-bosomed daughter of the gods,
For behind us is the day.

Night. Uproar of voices. Tumult in the ship.
Is not our day over, and should we not give tongue
As the birds give tongue at evening?
"Good has been our short spring day!"

Silence. Sleep.
A new day comes, but a strange one.

A red sun shall rise upon us, and the day shall be red,
And we shall see no evening to this day.
So be it. This shall be for others.
We have made them the gift of it.
Gladly we made them the gift, for proud men are we,
Free givers. We were besought and we gave.
Let all men know that we cared not but to give princely,
Yet valuing this that we gave.

Long ships nosing in the dark.
Black shapes of ships
Stealing in the less black darkness.
Black water and the blackness of what is not sky.
Hills, peradventure.
Stillness.
Once again stillness ;
As of the inside of a balloon filled with gas
That a spark may ignite.
Not a ripple, not a breath,
But all alive, secretly active, explosive, electric ;
As positive to negative,
So the stillness of this to the stillness of death.

Clop !
Quite a little noise as if a pod had burst.
Then, clopple, clopple, clopple, clopple, clopple :
Epidemic and panic among the pods.
Something else, possibly ?
Just possibly.
But in the distance. Here pods bursting.
The gas at any rate is crackling.
Its secret activities are germinating.
At last the electric stillness makes itself audible.
And now it detonates,
Shattering itself, reverberating :
A single dominating roar.

Stars among the hills, now hills beyond peradventure,
Against a daybreak sky.

A blue-blackish sky with a light in it
Of a tenderness ineffable.
The hills yet black as blindness starred.
More roars, regular and spaced,
Of a beast taking breath.
Continuous clopple, clopple, clopple,
Rhythmically varied.
The whole a harmony, an undeniable concerto,
To which the long ships steal like serpents,
Curious but stately,
Drawn by the music of the charmer.
Mutely and suavely,
The black ships trail across the sleepy water
That knows no music but the music of the wind
And fears no clamour in its coat of armour.

Light grows, and grows less tender,
Following the law.
The new day is with us,
Come at a glide so subtle that we saw it not.
Day was not and now is,
Full-dressed in his blue and gold.
With a wipe he has burnished the sea's dull armour,
To use it for his looking-glass.
In his young pride he peacocks before us,
And the sight gladdens us.
A day of goodly appearance this our gift.
Bravely it shines, and the shine of it honours us.
Bravely the water glitters,
Bravely the guns roar
And the fountains rise.
Bravely the loaded boats drive at the shore.
The clopple, clopple, clopple, clopple, clopple
Is off to the hills,
But we shall follow it—
If we are permitted.
That fountain spouted nigh. It sprayed us!
Our serpent is disturbed and draws away.
And there goes a boat caught up in a fountain.

How funnily its ends tossed,
Closing like a pair of scissors
And spilling its passengers.
But gaily ! Is not this a play ?
A water-carnival, a regatta,
With the launches darting, the boats racing,
Spangles on the water, sparkle in the air,
Blue above, blue below, gold and blue everywhere,
Except on the hills which curiously gloom, rejecting the day ?
Festive it is, but the hills refuse to be festive.
Brooding they are, and sour, and barren and graceless.

Yes, but this is make-believe.
The hills gloom as hills gloom from a back-scene.
Artistic contrast !
This is a theatre, and we are the spectators.
In the water-filled arena is mimic war.
See these infants
With piping voices
Commanding the launches,
From whose mouths issue orders to men.
Look at their gigantic tobacco-pipes !
Were ever infants seen with pipes
But as figures of comedy ?
Midshipmen ! Tut, tut ! Little drolls they are.
Comic relief to the seemingly dangerous spouting fountains.
They are quite unconcerned, these babies.
So may we be.
Let us enjoy the show.
There goes another boat.
This shuts up like a jack-knife, the blade upon the handle,
And disrupts, leaving a dark molecular bobbing residue.
The actors are getting a bath.
But most of them have dived, for verisimilitude—
Eh ? They could not get rid of their packs ?
So they drown. They would, of course, in ugly reality.
But there is no ugliness about this
We are spectators of an exhilarating show

Perfectly staged under brilliant conditions.
Surely that was a dream of a day for others.
What gift do we make of this day ?

What ? Is there a rôle for us ?
Do we enter the boats and go where the fountains spout ?
Unbuckle your belts and loosen your packs, my fellows.
Accidents happen, even at play.

Shall we, or shall we not ?
We are halfway.
More. A little more.
Nay, nay.
We are men of dry land. To drown is no sort of death.
We did not come here to drown. It was not in our bargain.
Damned stupid anticlimax !
Ah, shallow water, Lord be praised !
We are spared that bathos.
The mountain conceived of God, but had a miscarriage !
Queer it should stick in the gizzard—
But it was as if the gift should be snatched from the hand.

Who are these upon the beach
Laid in an orderly row in the sunshine,
Head to the hills, feet to the sea ?
Their eyes are wide, but they blink not.
The sun roasts them, but they sweat not.
He scorches them, but they do not redden.
Their colour is clay, for clay are they.

So this is no play.
Now we know that this is no play.

Look at them. Look not askance.
It is better to know.
We have looked and are wiser men.
They were, they are not.
They were unsubstantial as a dream.

Along the beach we go.
Then into a gully.
We sit. The hour has not struck for us.
We ease ourselves and talk, eat, smoke,
Just as on a hundred days before this
When we played at war in the desert.
There is no difference,
But for the clopple, clopple, clopple from over the hills,
And things in the air whining with evil desire,
Rocketing over our heads,
Or sudden on sight of us squealing with fury
And blasting.
But we sit snug and unhurt.
One, indeed, by ill luck, is hurt.
As he goes we note his look.
It is astonished and highly animated,
As though he had been lit up.
From the hills that crowd to the sky others descend upon us,
Men wearing bandages. Very dark, very dirty men.
They stumble and stagger. They too are lit up, but otherwise,
They are men who have *fought*.
They are not like us poor clods sitting waiting.
We regard them with awe and veneration.
On them an aureole shines ; they have received the accolade ;
They are our own sublimations.
For all that, we are willing to linger here snugly.
Yet we are not happy. We affect to be.
There is oppression in the air.
There is more than the oppression of a blistering sun in this close gully.
Our faces, each to each, are a little strange.
(*All* is strange. All *is* different.)
I have a sad feeling.
Tobacco does not soothe, and my lunch has not agreed with me.
I miss the brilliance of the water-pageant.
Gone is the sparkle of the early morning.

Listen.
The clopple, clopple, clopple is returning.
It is more of a rat-a-tat-tat,
Claiming our ears.
That has a meaning.

Just so. Here comes one running,
With words screwed up in his face.
Orders. Men rise.
We march.

Back to the beach, from which the sun has hid.
(How sombre now the sea !)
Then into the hills.
Were ever hills so gloomy, desolate, savage ?
What is this land so morose ? Is it of the earth truly,
Or of the barren, bitter, skeleton moon ?
This thin, sick scrub is like the scanty wool
On an old decrepit blackamoor's head.
All is a jumble, as if it had been made before form was,
Or botched in the making and left.
This land was never completed.
It is bitter with unfulfilment, vicious with frustration.
There is no hope in it, nor resignation.
It presses hard, it would enter my spirit and defeat me,
Were my spirit not entrenched.
Havoc of the morning !
Gravestone grey above, and around, hemming us in,
Savage desolation.
Evil whining in the air of the things that seek us,
And finding us, burst with their rage.
These things are maniacs,
But cunning, taking us in the open places.
Clatter ! Something falls like a lot of old ironmongery.
And that's about all he is, poor lump.
This hill is villainous steep and stony,
And urge is upon us.
Come along, hurry up there ! Double up, scramble up !
My ribs will crack if my lungs and my heart swell more.

I am carrying fully a ton.
And these flats, where the maniacs wait for us.
Flats! They are prairies, for width.
And is this war?

Nothing to stab at, nothing to shoot at,
In a senseless jumble of hills that are vacancy incorporate,
Except for those intangible devils of the air.
They have taken a leader.
He goes down ungainly on all fours,
Turning an anxious face as that of a dumb brute,
Dreadly uncertain, piteously beseeching.
(Ah, the horrid shredding of the mask!)
Then—sudden erasure. Gone.
We scramble past it, scuttling.
We have caught dissolution in the act.

At last a living thing beside ourselves.
A minute figure in the tumbled immensity,
High up among the rocks.
He moves by tiny leaps, waving his arms.
He is like a Lilliputian dancing in the palm of Gulliver.
He stops. He is signalling, swiftly.
To us. There is need of us, up there,
To prop toppling battle, keep the brows of these hills
From spilling disaster.
Strain, strain then the more! We want no whip.
We are blood horses.
Miracle, our lungs are freer, our hearts have won room for
themselves;
And here is a level stretch, and covered,
Before the last heave-up against gravity.
Why, this is pleasure
While it lasts.
Now Atlas, bend again your back.
(What faces! The familiar parodied.
Veils of distortion. Is my face like that?)
But this is the wickedest, yea, by the gods that have no
mercy!

This hill would curl over and destroy itself, like the scorpion,
Of poisonous, crooked-brained spite.
We have no eyes but for the false footholds,
For the loose stones and the slippery clay.
We can no more stop than a clock while the springs hold ;
We are machines wound up to go till we break. Automata.
We have forgotten if hills have tops, and it does not matter.
There is a lightness under my eyelids now. What is that ?
The sky-line. The sky-line has come down. Or we have come up to it.
This must be—the Top !

Halt ! Down !

There is nothing here. Still nothing.
Just empty, rolling, scrubby, crumpled inanity.
A country broken with neglect.
A despised land that was never worth notice,
Too long left to moulder in dejection
Now to perk up at becoming a battle-ground.
And where is the toppling battle ?
A rat-tat-tat and a crackle on the left is all the sign of it.
Malignant insects waspishly skirl over us,
But the big, whining, blasting devils no longer harry.
This is peace to what was on the way.
This is positive heaven.
We rest. Nothing matters.
It is all past understanding.

We rest. Things begin to matter again.
This peace is astounding, more than anything.
It is untrustworthy ; we would rather it were not.
It is the peace of the bravo who lies low to spring.
Behind those bushes are eyes ; there are eyes on the ridges.
Once more we have uneasiness, as in the gully.
Action. Let us have action, though it be ill.

We lie in loose strings along the hill-top.
The strings stir with the breath of a word that passes,

And as it passes we tauten, gather ourselves.
Wait for the signal. Now. Up !
As a wave gets up
We rise, and the crest of the wave is a-glitter.
We are off !

More of the skirling insects also are off.
While the atmosphere rouses
The landscape stays indifferent and torpid.
We are launched. It was a brave sensation,
Losing intensity, however,
When we seem to be launched into space.
We should like to see an object.
This country looks as if it might swallow us
In pure apathy and absent-mindedness.
It breaks us up, or, rather, we break up in it
Under its awkward, stuck, sodden impassivity.
If it has any design, it is to disintegrate.
It has no semblance of a pattern, but is all rumples, creases and excrescences.
An idiot land, as its mate was a vicious-crazy.
It imparts its idiocy, infecting the mind with it ;
Giving a tinge of idiocy to the day.
This day has not merely passed understanding,
It reels into insanity.
What are we doing—barging into the country,
Which just gives way before us, stickily ?
We are lost in this treacle-tub of a country.
Where are the rest ?
But the hornets have not lost us.
The air sings to the tune of whang-whang,
With no individual voices audible.
The hornets have taken many before us to-day.
They lie carelessly scattered, ours and the others,
Those others whom alive we have not yet seen.
Most have a totally restful appearance
As if irresistible sleep had overcome them suddenly.
They are blank.
And they have a dusty look.

But here is one who does not rest.
He kneels upon one knee. What stays him ?
Did a last will to live uphold him in death ?
He is a dim symbol, the single gleam of intelligence
In this chaos of insanity.
He is dead, but he has not fallen.
Death has conquered him, but he has not bowed to death.

High above the whanging twanging hornet song
Suddenly a new note.
Thin, wild, quavering, altissimo.
A cheer !
It pierces.
Our men have struck !
Their cheer is the piercing cheer of piercing bayonets.
We know it, although it is like nothing that ever we heard.
It pricks us ; we tingle.
It sheds light upon our darkness, too. It is a beacon in our
 night.
We are not lost ; this land has not swallowed us.
There is sanity.
Bear this way. Follow the cheer.
There they are ! No.
These are not ours.
They see us and drop behind their bank.
They are few, alone, cut off.
Lost like ourselves, perhaps, in this imbecile country.
No, they are not ours, but they shall be ours !
What came ye out for to see—and to slay ?
Behold !
See them, the foreseen, but unexpected.
How curiously unexpected.
All the day have we looked for them,
Yet start when they appear.

It is the moment. It is reality.
Nothing is real till the moment gives birth to it.

And yet this is familiar. We have enacted it before.

There is nothing untaught in our instant procedure.
We do not pause. We stoop low and rush.
They are the goal. We are the ball.
Propelled, we go. There is no more to it,
Except sensation,
Now too dazzling-swift to impress.
That wild altissimo again.
It is ourselves. It is our spirit in the air.
We soar. Death is out of sight.
We are the destroyers, not the destructible ;
Born to destroy, born for this moment of death-giving,
Reborn for this reborn moment,
As well known to us as our faces.
Thus in the past a thousand times we fell upon our enemies
With claw, with club, with spear.
Their eyes flinch, they would flee.
It is too late for them.
They would drop their guns and fling up their arms.
It is too late for them.
The madness of undrawn blood is upon us.

We kill.

What have we done ? We have killed those who would
 surrender.
Then why were they too late ? Can the cat stay her spring
 in mid-air ?
The fault was not ours.

They would have cheated us. And our dead are many.

It was an orgie. I will not remember it.
(But I am gladder than I was.)
Wipe off the mess upon your steel.

We move on, following the direction of the beacon,
Which flares distantly again.
My gladness is fizzling out of me
As from an uncorked bottle.

I grow flat. I am tired and thirsty . . .
I wish this field-day would end.
Surely it is time to march back to camp.
We have had enough of these exercises.
We are ready for the canteen.
I could drink a gallon of beer without stopping.
When will the " Cease Fire " sound ? . . .
Oh hell, but this is war.
Am I going to have delusions now ?
Shall I be seeing a mirage of pale ale next ?
My God, but I would lie down in it !
Come, pull yourself together.
This—is—War.
Unlimited. Calling for unlimited endurance.
Take a prudent pull at your precious warm water,
And don't glue your mouth to the spout.
This day will never end.
It is at least forty-eight hours long already,
And the sun is still high ;
And the land is waterless.

No more the beacon flares,
But we have guidance.
We hear as it were the crackle of it ;
Its flames roar.
There is a mighty fire ahead of us.
It spreads, by the sound of it, to right and left of us.
In this deep fold of the land it is a sound only.
The hornets are high in the air.
Now another sound regularly punctures it.
One, two, three, four bangs.
Pause, and da capo.
Indeed a lively combustion ahead ;
Even unseen, sufficient to wither illusions.
We shall be there.
This day grows more rational.
I have a nascent suspicion there is purpose in it,
At present hidden in the womb.

Over this mangy hog's back—curse its bristles—
We should have view.
It breaks.
An amphitheatre.
But the ring is empty ;
The actors are all in the gallery beyond.
We do not stand to gaze :
There is no standing-room up here
For the pests of the air that swarm fanwise upon it.
We hurtle into the empty arena
(Not quite empty : it is opening as a scrap-heap)
And are borne by momentum across it and switchbacked up a bit.

The lost whelp has found its dam.

The lost whelp has found its dam beleaguered,
Bloodily snapping at a pack.

The horns of our enemies encompass us.
As the claws of a crab they close to crack us, cooping us within.
(Now does the day grow big !)
But why did you stay, brothers ?
It was the word.
We have fought with an army this day.
For that went we out, that our brothers who fought through the morning
Might hold to their gain of the morning.
We fell on this army and stood in its way.
Safe is the gain of the morning now, dear bought,
And our turn to pay.

Now is the day delivered of its purpose.
Now is all made clear.
And now the hour of the gift's deliverance
Too is near.
(Do you fear ?

Nay. There is nothing that cannot be spent, and fear is spent.
I have no more fear.)

Take. It was pledged freely and is given freely—
But they who buy me shall pay dear!
I will have my brokerage of them.
They shall wish they had bought in another market ere the deal be closed.
They shall make no profit of this purchase. . . .

Now is the end here.
Sing, for the day is over!
(Does a red veil blind you?
What but the curtain falling on the play?)
Sing, for the day is over!
Red the sunset?
Happy omen, so men say.
Red the steel? The pain red-hot?
You dream, my children. All is over.
Death is slain.
All is over, dream or not,
Of gaining, giving, dying, living.
Sing once again.
Birds at evening, sing your lay:
" Good has been our short spring day!"

High in air it drifts away.
High in drifts and dies, dies away.

S. W. POWELL.

RESURGENT

OH, when at last the dark we are
Shall waken to a sudden dawn,
To which our opal morning star
And crimson sun are dim and wan;
Ah! then perhaps all strife shall cease—
For what shall be we have in truth
No fitting word,—Eternal peace
But with the ardent heart of youth?

BERESFORD RICHARDS.

OLIVET

STAY little son with me
Go not all lonely where
Olive and cypress tree
Shadow thy golden hair.

Thine eyes so wondrous deep
Mirror the pain of years
Dews on the hilltop steep
Picture thy manhood's tears.

Arms long and dark and wet
Beckon thee from my side
Go not to Olivet
Little one here abide.

Here in the perfect Now
Lilies their sweetness pour
Cypress and olive bough
Live on for evermore.

Stay little son with me
Just for to-day forget
Folded in Mother arms
Cruel arms of Olivet.

JOSEPHINE HUGHES.

WATER-LILIES

SO Loveliness upon the waters walks
As Christ of old
In gaberdine of white
And sunlit gold ;

And we, who stay our boat
To pluck the stems
Of water-lily buds,
Hear rustling hems,

As if again invisible He tread,
Lilies His Footprints, willows overhead.

A. D. L. WILSON.

A SERIES OF LOVE SONNETS

I

BEAUTY has laid her benediction here,
Serenely touching each and every thing :
Arc of the sky—the little birds that sing
Their small, important songs—even the mere
Quiver of grass beneath our trysting feet—
And the tranquillity of field and wood . . .
So, in some dreaded, distant solitude,
There will approach a memory replete
With all the lost delight which was our own ;
We in our separation shall deny
The swift-advancing years, and sense the high
Young fervour that possessed our hearts alone—
And see the strangely tremulous grass—and find
Spirit of beauty left too far behind.

II

However time may leave its certain mark
Upon my dreams, I shall remember you
And the enchanted hours that once we knew.
Like a clear candle burning through the dark,
You—and those hours—will come again to me :
I shall acknowledge all I dared to give
When my whole self did wake and love and live
In one lost April ! I shall ever be
Proud in the knowing that you held me dear,
And that we walked together spring-sweet ways—
Thought to sustain me in these hungry days !
April has fled. . . . You are no longer near . . .
Only this thought against your not returning !
Only the tremor of a candle burning !

III

Now is my heart too slow in its forgetting . . .
Autumn has lingered here : Each scarlet leaf
Protests against an agony of grief,
But shrinks from winter's quiet advent letting
The pale snow cover every tortured place.

Now does your slightest gesture claim me still,
And the old wonder of your presence fill
This solitude—and still I see your face.
The fires of autumn are upon me, yet
More terrible to me is winter's coming :
I am afraid of the pale snow—the numbing
Of all the senses. Rather than forget,
Oh, heart, endure this high, autumnal flame !—
Be wounded by remembrance—and a name !

CATHERINE PARMENTER.

IV

Let us remember, Sweet, that you and I
Out of the richness of our spirit's store
May give the saddened what they cannot buy
With gold. We stand upon a magic shore
Bathed in the splendour of the sunlight's grace,
What time those others, by an unlit sea,
Must roam the barren coasts of commonplace,
Bereft of bliss, devoid of ecstasy.
Then, from the beauty we have made our own,
Shall we not fling to them one burning beam ?
One petal from the fragrance we have known ?
One fragment from our multi-coloured dream ?
Till, like the summer roses, we shall live,
Which, ever recreated, ever give.

ELEANOUR NORTON.

V

Can lovers die ? I think not while love lives ;
While in some heart there still is joy and pain ;
While bruised and broken men can still regain
The strength and hope and courage that love gives.
There is no death, so long as saddened eyes
Can light with love and shed their weariness,
While hearts that break can lose their bitterness
For kindness sake. I know love never dies.
There is no death, no end of beauty's life

While untried youth believes the world ideal,
Till sorrow brings with it the power to feel
And know that only love brings joy to strife.
Can lovers die? Not while triumphant birth
Renews our souls, and love brings God to earth.

BASIL HARVEY.

VI

Love's Silence

Even your name no one may ever know,
  Since that I must not tell, but closely fold
  From sight like precious jewel darkly rolled
In damask cloth; or like sweet herbs that grow
Unseen, distilling fragrance that may flow
  By subtle channels far; or like an old,
  Remembered song, whose echoes still may hold
The heart in secret dreams as long ago.

Since I have loved you, and through you my days
  Have known both pain and blessedness, delight,
    And grief sharper than blade of ice, you ride
No more companionless through dappled ways
  Of sun and shadow, for henceforth the white
    Steed of my untold love runs by your side.

DORIS MAJOR.

VII

How Shall we Sing of Love?

How shall we sing of Love at this late hour?
The poets through the centuries have rung
Love's carillon, in notes of varying power,
Since Solomon's mellifluous song was sung.
And, Shakspeare, strong, sweet singer, wisely told
In sonnets, richly rounded, and complete,
Love's whole philosophy. He would be bold
Who sought in verse this marvel to repeat!
And, yet, in every generation, Love
Awakes the same fierce urgency to sing,
And each new lover to the world must prove
His mistress, on the earth, the fairest thing.

The world grows old, but Love, so oft reborn,
Still keeps the freshness of its primal morn.

M. STEWART.

VIII

The Vale of Memory

Adown the vale her youthful way she goes
While straying zephyrs lurk to kiss her hair ;
And where her footsteps fall, my heart is there,
In tropic sand or 'midst eternal snows.
Throughout long days that vale remains—a rose
Against a cottage wall, a garden where
Tall hollyhocks were sweet, but not more fair
Than she. I saw her then—for ever flows
The busy brook she crossed. I know too well
That she will come no more ; and mem'ry lends
A glimpse at times, till like a solemn knell
The torture falls that all my being rends :
Forsaking her, I sought the city spell,
And now I dwell alone, with thoughts as friends.

ARTHUR LYNNFORD-SMITH.

A TURQUOISE VASE FROM THE VALLEY OF THE NILE

ITS beauty safelier guards this vase than glowering
Fortress girded by thunder-bolts. Its sheen
Worn by old lovers' hands is damascene
Against war's havoc. In the desert flowering,

Where blue is a hunger and green a mortal thirst,
This hybrid colour came to birth in the yearning
Of some mad exiled poet, to cool the burning
Monotony of sand. Time, do your worst—

This turquoise vase from the valley of the Nile,
Glazed in the furnace of pain for all to borrow,
Has power still to ease a lover's sorrow—
Blue waves in the desert lapping a green-clad isle.

GERTRUDE HUNTINGTON McGIFFERT.

THERE SHALL BE TEARS

HOW strange it seemed ! In wonderment
She cast about her eye
To see the glory of the light
That trailed, as they went by.

To see the softness of the robes
That velveted her feet ;
To see the softness of their eyes—
She heard their voices sweet.

The gentlest of them all approached
Seeing her modesty—
" But have you seen the Lord ? " she said,
" In all His majesty ? "

" I have been busy looking down,
I could not look on high ;
I did not want to come so soon "—
The angel heard her sigh—

" But you will wish to stay and weave
Soft lilies for His head—
It was so hard, that wreath of thorn,"
The long-time angel said—

" We were so happy weaving wreaths
Of bay leaves for our brows,
For we were just about to make
And consecrate our vows."

But long-time angel took her hand—
Perhaps remembering—
And led her down a smiling path
Beside a cooling stream.

" A spring ! it was our trysting place—
Oh, agony of heaven !
Alone without his gentle hand,
Without his kiss at even ! "

They idled on beneath the shade
Of sunlit yellow tree,
She stooped to pick a violet
To hide it secretly.

The fold of her white robe she loosed—
Upon her whiter breast ;
She placed the flower with a tear
Where once his lips had pressed.

She sandled the arbutus trail
And knelt upon its mirth,
And prayed that she might buried be
In heaven, and go to earth.

As long as heaven is heaven, and earth
Is only earth, there'll be
Tears in heaven pouring down,
Upon earth's memory.

For did not long-time angel sigh
To see such loneliness,
To know that utter grief could live
In heaven's loveliness ?

The angels lingered by the brook
In silent sympathy,
As Christ walked by, in quietness
Of His simplicity.

He did not speak, He only placed
His hand beneath the chin
Of her most lately come, and looked
So deep within, within.

And from within her look she gave
Freely and unafraid,
And saw within His crystal eye
A crystal tear was staid.

"Thou weepest, too, oh crystal Christ—
Thou weepest for me too?"
"I weep for him who has not come—
I cannot weep for you."

"But he would come if Thou wouldst send
To him a messenger."
"I sent a message unto him,
You were the messenger—

"'Tis only since you left his sight
That he has looked my way—
'Tis only since you came to me
That he began to pray."

"By coming on ahead of him
I've led him unto Thee?"
"By coming on ahead of him,
You've brought him unto Me."

"Oh Lord, how wonderful to lead
My lover into Light!
And may I stand beside your knee
And hear his prayer to-night?"

LUCY MUNSON TAYLOR.

BARROW-IN-FURNESS

AFORETIME from my watch-tower high,
Where Kirkby Moor bisects the sky,
I saw the Barrow Steel Works flare,
Like Satan, when the heavenly air
He assailed with nitre and black powder,
Himself than all the archangels prouder;
But now, like thunder-blackened trees,
The chimneys stand, in the salt breeze.

T. E. CASSON.

ABER VALLEY

THE valley is a cup : the summer sky
With strange blue nectar fills it, and I lie
An amber grain below, while Time stands by.

The blue is stirred by tiny ruffling white,
The rim with holy radiance pulses bright,
The Drinker's face is veilèd from my sight.

What now if God shall drain the cup ? Will all
This supersensuous ecstasy just fall
Away until I hear the trumpets call ?

Three yellow ants awake me ere God's lips
Can drink : my soul the cup of silence sips
Alone : from off my eyelid one ant slips.

Fine beads of spray flash on a dipper's wing :
The mountain burn, ceasing to brawl, doth sing :
The glory of full noon holds everything.

The buoyant throng of water through a pool
Rebinds me to myself, flesh sane and cool,
My limbs like fronds—I am no more a fool.

A. S. COLLINS.

AT THE WORST OF WINTER

ON long cold nights when I am not asleep,
I lie awake dreading your scorn like the stab of a toothache.
For there are no flowers in the air now nor fanfares of wind,
I shrink from all the day's dark countenances—
In fear I dream of ice on immaculate graves,
Of the first flakes of feeble lonely snow.
But you are much stronger than I, my conscience is
Never silent and never triumphant—so at least befriend me
Till the southern birds come back from the foreign woods,
And the skies cease to slaver thawing snow.

E. P. B. LINSTEAD.

ON THE POETRY OF JOHN DRINKWATER

IN 1923 Mr. Drinkwater published a two-volume edition of his *Collected Poems.* It was sumptuously produced, but like many more of these "collected editions," it contained a certain amount that might well have been left out, and this fact it may have been that induced the reviewers, almost without exception, to turn and rend Mr. Drinkwater for the amount of bad poetry that he had written. Of course, if they had looked in the right place, and if they had read the two volumes with patience, they would have found quite a large proportion of good poetry; but apparently many of them neglected to do this, or at least, if they did, they failed to give much evidence of it. *The Times Literary Supplement,* where one would have expected an extended review, gave the book but scant notice, being content to indicate, in some five or six lines, its chief contents without any valuable comment either favourable or adverse. *The New Statesman* was luke-warm about it, admitted that the poet had some merits, and then went on, for about three quarters of a column, to detail his shortcomings. *The Nation and Athenæum* was even less amicably inclined than this. "He [i.e., the poet]," declares the reviewer, "is dexterously skating over thin ice. He stands up with many a toast for rurality, for instance; but when he is in the middle of his 'God's Own Country' acclamations, we must boorishly butt in with 'Prove It!'" Now let us admit that Mr. Drinkwater *has* produced some poor poetry, which need never have been resuscitated; posterity will see that it is not perpetuated. Let us admit, further, that his acclamation of "rurality," as our critic styles it, sometimes becomes a little mechanical and artificial; but even so we shall find it difficult to justify the remarks cited above. If they had been applied only to specific pieces the case would have been different, but they are general statements, of a type which reviewers are over-fond of making, and as such they will never hold water; for in spite of his less meritorious work, Mr. Drinkwater has written genuine poetry of a high standard of excellence.

To playgoers he is known as the author of *Abraham Lincoln*; the average reader of poetry may have never so much as turned the pages of the volumes *Preludes*, *Swords and Ploughshares* or *Seeds of Time*, but he will know him as a great poet from those few lyric pieces included in the English Association's two volumes of *Poems of To-day*, and Mr. Methuen's *Anthology of Modern Verse*. It may be a great claim that I am making, but I venture to suggest that if Mr. Drinkwater had produced nothing else but these few verses, he would still have gone down in history as one of the outstanding poets of the early twentieth century.

Next to Sir William Watson he is probably the most individual of all modern poets. He has a style and an outlook all his own; his strong, positive personality is impressed upon all that he has written, and the influence of his predecessors or contemporaries, though not altogether absent from his work, is not very great. Certainly, in his very early lyrics there are traces of William Morris and Rossetti; *The Fires of God* is reminiscent of Francis Thompson (it is, indeed, comparable in conception to *The Hound of Heaven*), while for a few years after 1912 Mr. A. E. Housman seems to have won his allegiance. But individuality, as we shall see later, is an essential tenet of Mr. Drinkwater's poetic creed, and consequently he soon forged for himself, by dint of careful essay and experiment, a poetry which was pre-eminently his own. Even when writing under his early influences he was never a slavish copyist; the personal element was always uppermost. In his later years it became so much the essence of his work that those modern critics who are fond of tabulating and classifying their writers like so many archæological specimens, have found it a matter of extreme difficulty to place Mr. Drinkwater in a "school." He himself claims fealty to no school, and he aims at founding none. His poetry is just the expression of that vital self, intangible, unfathomable, yet earnest and real, which is John Drinkwater.

Yet despite the comparative smallness of his debt to other writers, at least two potent influences manifest themselves in practically everything he has written, whether poetry, prose or drama. I refer to a native puritanism on the one hand, and a passionate love of the Warwickshire countryside on the other. Mr. Drinkwater comes of an old Roundhead family, of seventeenth-century yeoman stock, quite humble and obscure beside the Hampdens and Pyms, but of the same type and calibre. " So far as I have been able to trace my descent," he tells us himself in that delightful, autobiographical volume, *Inheritance*, " there has been no drop of any but English blood brought into the family for over two hundred years. And Midland English at that, with an area of no more than two counties." And elsewhere in the same volume he describes his ancestors as " a stock of the right Puritan breed ; not straight-laced or mealy-mouthed or shy of cakes and ale and pleasures, but having a rooted aversion to being pushed about by other people. They were, generation after generation, easy-going folk so long as they were left alone. They made no exorbitant demands on life, and they seldom displayed unusual aspirations, but one and all they refused to be time-servers. With that, they were a civil, peaceable lot, with a cantankerous John but once in a century or so."

Our poet, the present-day descendant of these Puritan forbears, still retains many of their characteristics, and they have left an indelible mark on his poetry. He has, for instance, that fierce and uncompromising love of freedom which was so typical of the Puritans—freedom of thought, freedom of action, freedom of life. To him liberty is the very essence of God, the birthright of all human beings from the highest to the most humble, and nature holds the charm for him that it does precisely because it is symbolic of the spirit of freedom in all its fullness. Then, besides this, his poetry always sounds a high moral note, again typically puritanical. Cromwell's advice to his soldiers, *Trust in God and keep your powder dry*, has passed into our language as one of the classical dicta of English history. To apply it to a poet and his works may well seem, on the face of it, inappropriate if not actually irreverent ; yet it does sum up almost exactly Mr. Drinkwater's own attitude. For what, after all, did Cromwell's counsel mean but this :

that God helps those who help themselves; that trust in the succour of a Divine Providence is of no avail unless we have the will to win our battles by dint of our own perseverance. "God," Mr. Bernard Shaw reminds us in his *St. Joan*, "will be no man's daily drudge," and that is just Mr. Drinkwater's position. He is a poet of effort and action, laying supreme emphasis upon the will, for it is through will alone that man can achieve his salvation. God's ordinances are written deeply in the heart of each one of us[1]; when, therefore, our poet writes his *Prayer*, he asks not for light in darkness, nor for a fuller knowledge of the end of life; not even for an alleviation of pain, suffering or doubt, but for the will to work for what in his own soul he knows to be right and noble.

We know the paths wherein our feet should press,
Across our hearts are written thy decrees,
Yet now, O Lord, be merciful to bless
  With more than these.

Grant us the will to fashion as we feel,
Grant us the strength to labour as we know,
Grant us the purpose, ribbed and edged with steel,
  To strike the blow.

Knowledge we ask not—knowledge thou hast lent,
But, Lord, the will—there lies the bitter need,
Give us to build above the deep intent
  The deed, the deed.

It is perhaps not altogether without significance that the heroes of all his great plays—Lincoln, Cromwell, Lee, are men cast in something of the Puritan mould, men with an earnest desire to do right and justice, men with a passionate love of liberty; but above all, men of unflinching and never-swerving will. To all of them the great issues of life are the moral and spiritual issues, and so it is with Mr. Drinkwater himself. He worships great men of this type, with ideals and lofty purposes; but, of course, he realizes that, after all, they are only mortal. This, again, is reminiscent of the Roundheads of the mid-seventeenth century. So there are ample grounds, it will be seen, for ranging Mr. Drinkwater with the Puritans; he has that same gravity and earnestness that was theirs, and he sets the same worth upon the individual.

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[1] Cf. the following lines from *X=O*:—

"It is so little that is needed
For righteousness; we are all so truly made,
If only to our making we were true."

Yet however close the analogy may hold in many respects, in one at least it breaks down. Mr. Drinkwater has a much wider religion than the Puritans ever knew; where they deprecated joy and hearty good-humour, he glorifies them as the witness of God in this world; where their eyes were turned towards a future life, for which earthly existence was but a preparation, to him this present, though but a part of a longer span, is of supreme importance just because it is the present. The one great reality, the one vital fact, is character; everything else is subsidiary to that, for in the long run man is lost or saved by character. So it is that he writes, in the opening chorus to *Abraham Lincoln*,

Kinsmen, you shall behold
Our stage, in mimic action, mould
A man's character.

This is the wonder, always, everywhere—
Not that vast mutability which is event,
The pits and pinnacles of change,
But man's desire and valiance that range
All circumstance, and come to port unspent.

Agents are these events, these ecstasies,
And tribulations, to prove the purities
Or poor oblivions that are our being. When
Beauty and peace possess us, they are none
But as they touch the beauty and peace of men,
Nor, when our days are done,
And the last utterance of doom must fall,
Is the doom anything
Memorable for its apparelling;
The bearing of man facing it is all.

So, kinsmen, we present
This for no loud event
That is but fugitive,
But that you may behold
Our mimic action mould
The spirit of man immortally to live.

I have said that the second great influence upon the poetry of John Drinkwater is the scenery and the countryside of his ancestral Warwickshire. The truth of this is patent throughout all his nature poetry. Mr. Drinkwater is as much a poet of Warwickshire as Mr. Blunden is of Kent or as Wordsworth was of the Lake District, and the whole of his rural verse is coloured by the genial atmosphere of that particular part of England which, let us remind ourselves, gave us our Shakespeare.[1] Compare nature in the poetry of, say, Sir William Watson, with that in the poetry of John Drinkwater, and the difference at once becomes evident. The two have an entirely different " character " about them. Sir William Watson writes of a grand but rather gaunt and barren countryside, of rocks, crags and moors ; Mr. Drinkwater shows us the green leaves and grasses, the golden fields of corn, the glory of the cherry blossom and the delightful merrymakings of the village folk as they gather in the cool and quiet of the evening at their Cotswold homes. And, of course, this must necessarily have an influence and an effect not only upon his whole outlook upon the world and life, but also upon the specific qualities which give his poetry its individuality. Now it is a peculiar fact, but a fact which I think is nevertheless true, that people who pass their lives amongst bright, cheerful and happy nature are less given to enthusiasm and excessive emotion than those who admire the more rugged type of scenery. That is not to say that they have less true appreciation of natural beauty ; but they shrink from expressing it so extravagantly. The Northerner thinks his companion of the south only lukewarm because he will not go into ecstasies with him over the hills of Yorkshire or the Derbyshire dales ; but he is not. He merely restrains the expression of his pleasure, and this, again, is just characteristic of Mr. Drinkwater. Formal and classical by instinct, he never allows himself to be carried away by emotion. That seeming lack of passion which mars some of his love poems is a definite asset in the nature-verses, for it prevents his falling into mere "gush," a most detestable quality in anyone, and doubly detestable in a poet. It gives to his lines a quiet, peaceful tone which, so far as the present writer is concerned, makes them the more impressive and effective. Though now and again there is a suggestion of stiffness, frigidity, pedantry, his vocabulary is for the most part finely chosen, and conveys his perceptions with a clearness which only one with a ready command of language could achieve.

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[1] Cf. *Inheritance* (1928), pp. 165–166, where he avows his love of the country streams and meadows. " If I am away from these for long," he writes, " I grow restless."

The least original of Mr. Drinkwater's poems are his very early ones, many of which are inclined to piety. With the publication of *Lyrical and Other Poems* in 1908 a definite advance is discernible in thought and treatment as well as in rhythm and melody. It was in this volume that our author first came forward as an independent poet, with a technique of his own and a style of his own; and withal, sufficient confidence in his poetic powers to declare his independence. It was a slender volume, but it contained promising work. There was the *Address to Shakespeare*, *Supplication*, the poem on *Edinburgh*, and, most noteworthy of all, *June Dance*, one of the earliest of the typical nature-poems. Only parts of it can be given here; length forbids its complete quotation. In this first passage the poet has created most happily the real June atmosphere; and although there is no attempt to localize the piece, it is clear that it is June in Warwickshire and its environs that he describes:

The dear wind moved deliciously,
And stayed upon the fragrant hill
And lightened on the sea;
And brushed the nettles nodding through
The budding globes of cloudy may,
And wavelike flowed upon the blue
Flowers of the woods.
                                    It was a day
When pearled blossom of peach and pear
Of blossoming season made an end,
Drifting along the sunlight, rare
Of beauty as thoughts between friend and friend,
That have no cunning, but merely know
The way of truth, for the heart is so.

Into this pageant of nature comes a company of weary, dull-eyed toilers from the neighbouring town, young men and maids all of them, but dulled in their appreciation of the countryside around them by the monotony of their daily drudgery. As they sink down upon the grass and fall asleep in the warmth of the June sun, the dissonance between the beauty and happiness of the natural scene on the one hand, and on the other the lack of æsthetic influences on these souls which were made with a craving for the beautiful, is brought home to the poet with such forcefulness that he falls to condemning all degrading toil as a violation of the divinity in man:

Beneath the clustered branch and bloom,
Littered with stars of amethyst,
Sun-arrows glancing through the gloom,
They slept; the lush young bracken kissed
The tired forms. Ah, well-away,
Within so wide a place to see
Fellows who measure every day
Merely the roads of misery.
Tall men, deep-bosomed maids were they,
As who should face the world and run
Fleet-footed down the laughing way,
With brows set fearless to the sun;
But slackened were the rippling thews
And all clean moods of courage dead,
Defeated by ignoble use
And sullen dread.

Mr. Drinkwater is the poet of life; and to him life means youth and happiness, joy in the world, joy in the supple motions of one's own physical being, with a spirit which is quick to draw deep, heartfelt delight from everything in its environment. A dulled intellect, insensibility to the finer influences of external nature, and all the other evils which degraded toil brings in its train, are the negation of life—a mere spiritual death. But after all, is there really such a thing as spiritual death? Our poet believes not. Even the dullest and most insensible soul is not beyond redemption, and by a touch of nature's healing power can be quickened into life. The sleeping toilers forget their labours; their faces brighten, they awake to the subtle influence of June, and with one accord, all their cares thrown to the winds, they dance for sheer joy of existence. They have found a new world:

Then they rose—the music played
But a little way ahead.
And with never question made
They were well to follow. Red
And gold and opal flashed the noon
On lichened trunk. Their raiment mean
Grew heavy in the dance of June,
And man and maid among the green
Unburdened them, and stood revealed
In clean, unblushing loveliness,
Clear-glowing limbs, all supple, steeled,
And shining; many a streaming tress
Slipped beautiful to breast and knee,
They proved a world where was no sin,
Exultant, pure in passion, free,
Young captives bidden to begin
New being. Sweet the music called,
Promising immortal boon,
Swift they set their feet, enthralled,
To the dreaming dance of June.

Now I suppose one would class this as a poem of imagination and fantasy; yet it also contains a philosophy, for, be it remembered, Mr. Drinkwater is predominantly a serious poet. "Born of and communicating urgent life," he wrote in a paper on *Poetry and Conduct*,[1] "that is the nature of poetry, and it is mere futility to confuse it with facile rhyming that comes from borrowed or half-realized emotions." That Mr. Drinkwater does occasionally confuse it with facile rhyming is no answer to his assertion; it merely means that his achievement is not always equal to his ideal, and his practice, not his precept, stands condemned. In his early poems he is groping for a definite purpose or poetic centre, striving to shape for himself an artistic creed, attempting to reconcile the function of the artist with the needs of the world at large; and in *June Dance* he comes nearest to a solution of the question. Though the piece is in no sense a didactic poem, though it contains no dogmatic statements of belief, the poet's conviction is plainly written between the lines. It is the artist's function to keep ever before the world the transcendent beauty of ordinary things, and so to quicken that spiritual life which modern materialism threatens to transform to a spiritual lethargy.

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[1] Printed in his *Prose Papers* (1917).

This position, suggested tentatively in *June Dance*, is taken up more definitely in *The Fires of God*, a piece which may be regarded as marking a turning-point in our author's poetical development. Here is no temporising, no intangible, fanciful imagining, no mere passive pietism; the piece is the story of a spiritual pilgrimage which ends with a confession of faith in the renewing power of beauty in all its forms, but more especially as it is seen in the natural world around us. In the first canto the poet tells how, fired with a religious and a philanthropic zeal, he determined to renounce the egotism of the past and to work hand in hand with God, doing His work in the world and raising mankind to heights as yet undreamed:

> Henceforth my hands are lifted to the touch
> Of hands that labour with me, and my heart
> Hereafter to the world's heart shall be set
> And its own pain forget.

But soon pride possessed his soul, and he came to regard himself as a being superior to other men, pursuing a mission nobler than theirs, and this, in its turn, led him to regard life and the world as cruel snares. As a prophet he went unheeded; disillusion and disappointment beset his mind, until he fell to self-pity; and then came the change, which led to a conversion as sudden as that of the Ancient Mariner. It was effected, too, by similar means. Contemplation of the wonders of the universe impress his mind with the reality of that Rhythm which underlies all life and creation, a Rhythm the very essence of which is a trinity of Love, Beauty and Truth, and he breaks into exultation with the words,

> O bountiful earth in adoration meet,
> I bow to you: O glory of years to be,
> I too will labour to your fashioning.

Go down, go down, unweariable feet,
Together we will march towards the ways
Wherein the marshalled hosts of morning wait
In sleepless watch, with banners wide unfurled
Across the skies in ceremonial state,
To greet the men who lived triumphant days,
And stormed the secret beauty of the world.

We may best describe Mr. Drinkwater, perhaps, by characterizing him as a blending of Bernard Shaw and John Galsworthy. He has the analytical and synthetic mind that is so typical of the author of *Man and Superman*, but he has also the feeling and sympathy that finds expression in *Strife* and *The Silver Box*. To all the hardships and injustices of the world he is fully alive, and he deplores them just as much as does Mr. Galsworthy ; but this does not blind him to the fact that there is still much of beauty for which we should give thanks. Life is still worth living, and it is the little and the seemingly insignificant things more often than not that make it so. That is Mr. Drinkwater's message. Look for happiness in all things, he counsels us, and you will surely find it. Life is full of good things for young and old alike, and

It's little that it matters,
As long as you're alive,
If you're eighteen in April,
Or rising sixty-five ;
When April comes to Amberley
With skies of April blue,
And Cotswold girls are briding
With slyly tilted shoe ! [*Cotswold Love.*]

A real forest-of-Arden atmosphere, this, where one finds sermons in stone and good in everything. Mr. Drinkwater, indeed, has this in common with his countryman, Shakespeare ; that he values rural life for its serenity, its beauty, its quietude and peace ; and about a great many of his nature verses there is a soothing, care-free air. *Cotswold Love* and others of its type are of the same class as *It was a Lover and His Lass*, or *Blow, Blow, thou Winter Wind*. But though he worships the country, it is not only there that he sees beauty ; it is to be found everywhere, even in the drabbest corner of the town. *In Lady Street* is another version of a theme which has found expression in poetry from Wordsworth's *Reverie of Poor Susan* to Mr. W. B. Yeats' *Lake Isle of Innisfrae*; namely, the countryman's yearning for the green fields and the running streams in the midst of a dingy and busy town. Lady Street is one of the dullest quarters of a great city. The thoroughfares, teeming with traffic, are close and slovenly, and when the sun shines upon them—which is rarely—it seems only to mock their desolation. Yet in the midst of all this lives one grey-haired man, poor but happy, who finds consolation in the memories of a youth spent in the gloriously free country, and

all day long
A tune is singing in his head
Of youth in Gloucester lanes. He hears
The wind among the barley blades,
The tapping of the wood-peckers
On the smooth beeches, thistle-spades
Slicing the sinewy roots; he sees
The hooded filberts in the copse
Beyond the loaded orchard trees,
The netted avenue of hops;
He smells the honeysuckle thrown
Along the hedge. He lives alone,
Alone—yet not alone, for sweet
Are Gloucester lanes in Lady Street.[1]

Yes, the charm of Mr. Drinkwater's poetry lies in the fact that he finds the beautiful and the truly heroic in the commonplace. He is the modern poet of domesticity, always striking an intensely human note, and in virtue of this he occupies a position in our twentieth century, similar to that occupied by Cowper in the eighteenth. Of course, he has nothing of Cowper's peculiar limitations, nor has he the circumscribed outlook of that poet; his literary inheritance, too, is different. But, like Cowper, he is interested in the little things of life and the world, and casts around them a halo of glory which elevates them to a plane truly poetic. One might almost say that the supreme significance of Mr. Drinkwater's writing lies in its revaluation of life. In an age which tends to worship the big man—the general, the dictator, the speed-king, the sports champion or the political leader—an age which regards great movements as of primary importance, Mr. Drinkwater emphasizes the value of the less imposing and more ordinary things.[1] The opening piece in his volume of *Poems*, 1908–1914 is entitled *Symbols*. The first stanza runs as follows,

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[1] Cf. also *Town Window*, where he is once again reminded of the beauty of the countryside by the objects and the noises of the town.

"And when the tramway down the hill
Across the cobbles moans and rings,
There is about my window-sill
The tumult of a thousand wings."

> I saw history in a poet's song,
> In a river reach and a gallows-hill,
> In a bridal bed, and a secret wrong,
> In a crown of thorns; in a daffodil,

and that stanza epitomizes Mr. Drinkwater's attitude to life. All existence is history in the making, and the true history of man is not to be studied in his wars and battles, or in the rise and fall of his kings, but in things which touch more nearly the life of the individual; for, as the poet reminds us in the conclusion to his verses, *History*,

> Such are the things remain,
> Quietly and for ever, in the brain,
> And the things that they choose for history-making pass.

In many poets this domesticity goes hand in hand with a certain laziness and inertia, both mental and physical; but in the case of Mr. Drinkwater this is not so. I have called him a poet of life; he is also a poet of high adventure, anxious to be up and doing, for to him life is no lackadaisical business to be shuffled through with the minimum of effort. No, it is a great adventure, and to live to the full, to get the best out of one's passage through this world, one must face it with a high heart, prepared to draw delight and infinite enjoyment from the rough as well as the easy. The more arduous the toil, the sweeter will be the rest at the end of the journey. Countless are the poems in which views such as these are voiced; but the best is *Evensong* a piece which, once again, it is impossible to quote in full, so I give the first stanza:

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[1] I should perhaps observe here that this is not contradictory of my former statement that Mr. Drinkwater himself admires great men like Abraham Lincoln and Oliver Cromwell; for what he really admires in them is their essential humanity and their appreciation of the little things of life. In the heroes of both his great plays this characteristic is emphasized; and I myself feel that Mr. Drinkwater would deny true greatness to a man who was lacking in this quality.

> Come, let us tell it over,
> Each to each by the fire-side,
> How that earth has been a swift adventure for us,
> And the watches of the day as a gay song and a right song,
> And now the traveller wind has found a bed,
> And the sheep crowd under the thorn.
> Good was the day and our travelling,
> And now there is evensong to sing.

Now this is exactly symbolic of its author's attitude and outlook; an attitude of vigour and action, of full-blooded enjoyment of the good things of the world. There is nothing in the least pagan about it; it is rather a glorification of God through full appreciation of his blessings.

This leads us on to another point. One gets used to associating Mr. Drinkwater with quiet, restful, relaxing nature; and certainly much of his nature-poetry is of that type. But he sings the praises of bracing nature also. Indeed, one sometimes feels that although he loves his hedgerows, his meadows and his cherry orchards for their beauty, he finds the real quickening joy of life in the winds and the storms. He once wrote an essay on *The Poet and His Vision*, in which he declared that "the supreme distinction of poetry is that it is an eternal testimony to the richest birthright of us all, a separate personality and the power to blend it with the external world into a new vision. Poetry is the record of the few who are able to find for the vision permanent expression." Whether this is a sufficient or even an acceptable definition of poetry I do not intend to debate here; but it is Mr. Drinkwater's definition, and judged by it he cannot be denied the title of poet. His verses are undoubtedly the expression of a separate personality, and in the best of them he does succeed in blending it with the external world to produce a new vision. Nowhere is that more apparent than in his verses exulting in the joy that can be drawn from a battle with the elements. *Challenge* a typical poem of the kind, is written in derision of those who shrink from facing the call of the louring heavens :

> You fools behind the panes who peer
> At the strong, black anger of the sky,
> Come out and hear the storm swing by,
> Aye, take its blow on your lips, and hear.
> The wind in the branches cry.
>
> No, leave us to the day's device,
> Draw to your blinds and take your ease,
> Grow peak'd in the face and crook'd in the knees ;
> Your sinews could not pay the price
> When the storm goes through the trees.

Now let us turn back again to the other side of his nature-poems, the lighter and more colourful aspect, complementary to these harsher moods. Here the qualities are specifically English. There is a sunny atmosphere about them all, produced by a series of shining figures which, piled one upon the other, create a veritable pageant of voluptuous colouring. Whether it is a month, a season, or an occasion of personal import that is individualized by this means, the poet has grasped just the traits which give it its true character. There is no superfluous word, no redundant image. Every syllable has its value in the picture, and the total effect is produced as much by the rhythm as by the scrupulous choice of vocabulary. Take as an instance this brief description of autumn :

> The yellow apples and the red
> Bear down the boughs, the hazels hold
> No more their fruit in cups of gold.
> The loaded sheaves are harvested,
> The sheep are in the stubbled fold,
> The tale of labour crowned is told.

There are not many lines, yet what a wealth of meaning is packed into them. The poet has caught the very genius of autumn. Practically every aspect of the season is suggested, from the luxuriance of the fruit and foliage, to the content and thanksgiving of man for a full harvest ; and it is all put so succinctly that it does not require a very great imagination to see in it a vivid picture of the countryside. It is the same in *Dominion*, a poem on the gladness of the world beneath the summer sun. The flowers, the bees, the birds and the butterflies all enjoy life so thoroughly that the poet himself catches some of their gladness, and rejoices with them :

And all these things seemed very glad,
The sun, the flowers, the birds on wing,
The jolly beasts, the furry-clad
Fat bees, the fruit and everything.

But gladder than them all was I,
Who, being man, might gather up
The joy of all beneath the sky,
And add their treasures to my cup,

And travel every shining way,
And laugh with God in God's delight,
Create a world for every day,
And store a dream for every night.

Mr. Drinkwater's favourite season is spring, the season of life and loveliness, when nature is renewed and the world wakes from its winter sleep. In one of his poems he refers to " the everlasting miracle of spring," and indeed, when we come to think of it, if not actually a miracle, this constant renewing process is at least a wonder ; yet we take it for granted ! It requires the poet to point out to us the marvel of it ; and Mr. Drinkwater, with his fine perception of values, is of all modern poets the most capable of the task. To him spring is not only a season of tenderness and beauty, but a season of quickening life, of rejuvenescence.[1] Just as he caught the spirit of autumn so felicitously in the few lines quoted above, so in the first of his *Roundels of the Year* he has caught the spirit of spring :

The spring is passing through the land
In web of ghostly green arrayed,
And blood is warm in man and maid.

The arches of desire have spanned
The barren ways, the debt is paid,
The spring is passing through the land
In web of ghostly green arrayed.

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[1] Cf. his praise of spring in the Midlands on pages 168–170 of *Inheritance.*

Sweet scents along the wind are fanned
For shadowy wood and secret glade
Where beauty blossoms unafraid,
  The spring is passing through the land
  In web of ghostly green arrayed,
  And blood is warm in man and maid.

Mr. Drinkwater knows his countryside intimately, and can depict it in all its moods, be it under the revivifying influence of April, the warmth of the June sun, or the sparkling beauty of the winter frosts. Always he strikes the appropriate note; always he creates the right impression. Oftentimes there is a vapourish atmosphere about his verses, suggestive of the drowsy contentment of the country scene on a warm, sunny day, when the whole world seems at peace with itself, and in such moments nature invariably takes on and reflects the mood of man. Scents and sounds are subdued, sights and colours are indistinct; white mingles with gold, blue with crimson, and from the distance there is borne upon the still, listening air the hum of bees. Then, too, the poet is especially familiar with birds and their ways. He knows their haunts, their habits and their appearance, and in one single short poem can tell us more about them than ever we have observed for ourselves in a lifetime. But perhaps the abiding impression that nature leaves upon him is one of harmony; and this, brought to bear upon the wider field of human life, produces an optimistic philosophy. Now here there is a striking contrast with both Matthew Arnold and Thomas Hardy, a contrast which at bottom is not between individuals but between the Victorian age and our own. To the Victorians nature was " red in tooth and claw," an attitude which led inevitably to a cynical, pessimistic outlook; the twentieth century, flattering itself that it has a completer view, has abandoned that position, and the result is the philosophy put forward by Mr. Drinkwater in *The Ships of Grief*:

" There is an hour will prove the tide,
  There is a sun will strike the sea."

Though the storm lours and the wind howls, though the waters dash wildly against the rocks, yet peace is never far away; finally the calm must come, with the sunshine lighting up the waves and casting a new glory over the whole scene.

A typical nature-poem of Mr. Drinkwater's, and, in the present writer's opinion, one of the best pieces he has ever written, is that entitled *The Midlands*. It has been included already in several anthologies of modern poetry, and through the author's courtesy I reprint it here:

Black in the summer night my Cotswold hill
Aslant my window sleeps, beneath a sky
Deep as the bedded violets that fill
March woods with dusky passion. As I lie
Abed between cool walls, I watch the host
Of the slow stars lit over Gloucester plain,
And drowsily the habit of these most
Beloved of English lands moves in my brain,
While silence holds dominion in the dark,
Save where the foxes from the spinneys bark.

I see the valleys in their morning mist
Wreathed under limpid hills in moving light,
Happy with many a yeoman melodist;
I see the little roads of twinkling white
Busy with fieldward teams and market gear
Of rosy men, cloth-gaitered, who can tell
The many-minded changes of the year,
Who know why crops or kine fare ill or well;
I see the sun persuade the mist away,
Till town and stead are shining to the day.

I see the wagons move along the rows
Of ripe and summer-breathing clover-flower,
I see the lissom husbandman, who knows
Deep in his heart the beauty of his power,
As, lithely pitched, the full-heap'd fork bids on
The harvest home. I hear the rickyard fill
With gossip as in generations gone,
While wagon follows wagon from the hill,
I think how, when our seasons all are sealed,
Shall come the unchanging harvest from the field.

I see the barns and comely manors planned
By men who somehow moved in comely thought,
Who, with a simple shippon to their hand,
As men upon some god-like business wrought;

I see the little cottages that keep
Their beauty still where since Plantagenet
Have come the shepherds happily to sleep,
Finding the loaves and cups of cider set;
I see the twisted shepherds, brown and old,
Driving at dusk their glimmering sheep to fold.

And now the valleys that upon the sun
Broke from their opal veils are veiled again,
And the last light upon the wolds is done,
And silence falls on flock and fields and men;
And black upon the night I watch my hill,
And the stars shine, and there an owly wing
Brushes the night, and all again is still,
And, from this land of worship that I sing,
I turn to sleep, content that from my sires
I draw the blood of England's midmost shires

In this one poem we have exemplified all that is best in Mr. Drinkwater's verse. It is definitely a localized poem; and I suppose one might call it a patriotic poem. Certainly it is a piece in which the spirit of the midland countryside is blended most happily with the emotions of the writer's own heart to produce that "tone" which is the distinguishing feature of all great descriptive verse. In the compass of five brief stanzas we are shown the landscape as it appears at different periods of the day, starting with evening and finishing with nightfall again, and in every case the picture is perfect, complete. By this I do not mean that we are given every detail; no, that is not Mr. Drinkwater's way. A complete picture is for him a picture which leaves a complete impression, and in that sense each of these stanzas is a finished entity. But there is also a composite impression which is even more potent, and in which is contained the very soul of the scene. Quietness, coolness, gaiety, simplicity, and above all beauty; all this is suggested, and much more that, by its very intangibility, cannot be adequately expressed in words. It can only be *felt* by a repeated reading of the poem. Undoubtedly the poet's facility of expression and his careful choice of language are a large part of the secret. The phrase "silence holds dominion over dark," for instance, strikes the keynote in the opening stanza; and the line

" I see the sun persuade the mist away " suggests a striking and a very realistic picture of an early sunrise on a morning at the end of summer. How many poets would ever have thought of using the verb " persuade " here ? Yet it is obviously just the word that is required.

But all this, however interesting it may be, is merely the apparatus of the poem. The really outstanding quality is the atmosphere, or character, of the Cotswold countryside ; and this quality appears not only in *The Midlands*, but in other poems also. With a remarkable dexterity and assurance of touch, Mr. Drinkwater can express the character of a locality or of a season as he can bring out the individuality of all his country folk, clearly and convincingly, yet within the bounds of a very few lines. *January Dusk* is an example. In three stanzas we get all the distinguishing traits of the latter end of winter, when the earth, having slept for so long, is eagerly awaiting the coming of spring :

Austere and clad in sombre robes of grey,
With hands upfolded and with silent wings,
In unimpassioned mystery the day
Passes ; a lonely thrush its requiem sings.

The dust of night is tangled in the boughs
Of leafless lime and lilac, and the pine
Grows blacker, and the star upon the brows
Of sleep, is set in heaven for a sign.

Earth's little weary peoples fall on peace
And dream of breaking buds and blossoming,
Of primrose airs, of days of large increase,
And all the coloured retinue of spring.

Truly an epitome of the spirit of an English New Year ! *Of Greatham* is a perfect picture of a pretty, peaceful country village, like many that abound in the southern counties ; or at least, that did abound there before their serenity was disturbed by the motor char-à-banc.

For peace, then knowledge more desirable,
  Into your Sussex quietness I came,
When Summer's green and gold and azure fell
  Over the world in flame.

And peace upon your pasture-lands I found,
Where grazing flocks drift on continually,
As little clouds that travel with no sound
Across a windless sky.

Out of your oak the birds call to their mates
That brood among the pines, where hidden deep
From curious eyes, a world's adventure waits
In columned choirs of sleep

Under the calm ascension of the night
We heard the mellow lapsing and return
Of night-owls purring in their groundling flight
Through lanes of darkling fern.

Unbroken peace, when all the stars were drawn
Back to their lairs of light, and ranked along
From shire to shire the downs out of the dawn
Were risen in golden song.

And now I must beg leave to quote one more poem of the countryside. It is entitled *Mamble*, and, if I remember rightly, was criticized somewhat severely by a reviewer of the author's *Collected Poems* as a mere nonsensical jingle. Yet it is not so nonsensical after all ; there is a definite idea behind it. How many of us have noticed the name of some unknown place upon a signpost and fallen to wondering what kind of a place it is ? Is it pretty or ugly, modern or old-fashioned ? And what are the people like who live there ? It is that curious, questioning mood that Mr. Drinkwater seizes upon in the poem *Mamble*. We have all of us some idea of what Mamble must be like—a lazy, sleepy little place. The name suggests it, perhaps because it rhymes with such words as " amble," and " ramble." So the poet falls to musing,

I never went to Mamble
That lies above the Teme,
So I wonder who's in Mamble,
And whether people seem
Who breed and brew along there,
As lazy as the name,
And whether any song there
Sets ale-house wits aflame.

The finger-post says Mamble,
And that is all I know
Of the narrow road to Mamble,
And should I turn and go
To that place of lazy token
That lies above the Teme.
There might be a Mamble broken
That was lissom in a dream.

This is not all of it, but it is enough to show the kind of poem it is; not very profound, certainly, but pleasant, nevertheless. And that is typical of many other of Mr. Drinkwater's verses; they are pleasant and happy. Atmosphere is their outstanding characteristic. It is not very often that the supernatural is broached; the poet prefers to deal with the more obvious aspects of a scene, but now and again we do catch a sense of an unseen presence, as in *Spectral*, where the author cannot escape from the haunting sensation that he is being constantly followed by a second, invisible self; or in *The Cotswold Farmers*, where the ghosts of all the dead farmers, for generations back, seem still to hang about the lands they once tilled. But for Mr. Drinkwater the real mystery is to be found in the simple things of nature and the countryside with which we are all so familiar that we scarcely pause to wonder at them. There is no need for miracles to convince us of the reality of God;

Look rather where the landscapes glow
Through crystal distances as though
The forty shires of England spread
Into one vision harvested,
Or when the moonlit waters lie
In silver, cold lucidity;
Those countenances search that bear
Witness to very character;
And listen to the song that weighs
A life's adventure in a phrase—
These are the founts of wonder, these
The plainer miracles to please
The brain that reads the world aright;
Here is the mystery of light.

This is from a poem which he entitles *Mystery*; *The Wood* concludes on a similar note:

> Everywhere, above me, underfoot,
> And haunting every avenue of leaves,
> Was mystery, unresting, taciturn,
>
> . . . . .
>
> And haunting the lucidities of life
> That are my daily beauty, moves a theme,
> Beating along my undiscovered mind.

There is a mystery about every human being, and we call it personality; in the same way every country and every district has its own mystery, or personality, and the native's irresistible attraction towards it constitutes patriotism in the true sense of the word. Mr. Drinkwater (in spite of the sentiments expressed in that beautiful poetic play *X = O*) is proud of the fact that he is an Englishman; but his pride is not a mere jingoistic one; no, his love for his country is founded purely on his love for the natural beauties of her woods, her fields and her gardens, and he is quite prepared to allow the same love to the natives of other lands.[1]

The greater part of his poetry, when it is not purely descriptive, is concerned with the expression of his own views and sentiments. But he can enter most sympathetically into the minds of others too. *Uncrowned*, with its masterful insight into the longings of a beautiful woman for one moment of real love, is a supreme example of this. There is a quiet restraint about it, a note of deep pathos; and it leaves us with a sense of hopeless desolation. Then there is *Wed*, the lament of a wife who has made a loveless marriage and regrets it too late. It is impregnated with genuine feeling, and the recurring, mournful refrain runs through it like a threnody played upon some plaintive theme. Again it is the poet's gift of apt expression, his power of suiting language to subject that gives the piece its beauty and melody. Mr. Drinkwater has a faculty for fine, suggestive phraseology. June is " shod in sovran gold," or she is

> " Proud, insolent June, with burning lips."

Spring passes over the land, " in web of ghostly green arrayed," and when the moon shines down upon a fair lady seated in a casement, we are told that

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[1] See *The Patriot.*

> The silver arrows of the moon
> Were splintered in her hair,

a figure obviously copied from Matthew Arnold's lines,

> " the deep-burnished foliage over-head
> Splintered the silver arrows of the moon."

But there is also the other side. Lapses from the poetic and the euphonious are sometimes to be found. To say that moonlight

> " Dapples the apples with deep-sea light "

is hardly worthy of the author of *The Midlands* and *Greatham* ; and it is surely a straining of poetic licence to declare that

> " Socrates and Shelley keep
> An Attic and Italian sleep."

It is just in such cases as these that the poet's power of expression fails him, and that he betrays a somewhat painful self-consciousness. We seem to see him patiently hammering out his stanzas rather than writing them under inspiration. He gropes helplessly for the right word, and failing to find it, falls back upon something absurdly grotesque ; or sometimes he is overpowered by the words and crushed beneath them. It is not his conception that is at fault, but his execution. Take, for instance, these lines from *Mrs. Willow*, a poem about a widow who lives alone in a cottage, with no pleasure but the cultivation of a little flower-plot. She speaks to no one, associates with no one, and no one knows anything of her history.

> But glum she is, and she listens now and then
> For a footfall, a footfall, a footfall again,
> And whether it's hope, or whether it's dread,
> Or a poor old fancy in her head,
> I shall never be told ; it will never be said.

The idea is poetic enough, but it is marred by the expression.

However, as I said at the beginning of this essay, though an author's lapses from the highest standards of his art cannot be altogether overlooked in a just estimate of him, there is enough really good poetry[1] in Mr. Drinkwater's various volumes to occupy our attention without our dwelling overlong on his less meritorious work. That he knows all about the technical and theoretical side of his craft he has shown in his little book *The Lyric*; and in his essay on *The Value of Poetry in Education* he has warned us against choosing poetry for its moral rather than its artistry. As for himself, he has ever shunned the didactic. He is intellectual and meditative, it is true, and his culture, his talent, and his sympathetic personality shine clearly through all that has come from his pen, but he rarely attempts to sermonize. Nor is he in any sense a singer of the antique; the Pipes of Pan are never once heard in his verses. In a poem addressed to Thomas Hardy he declared of the poet that " He serves us best who sings but as he sees," and if that be true, England owes a debt of thanks to John Drinkwater, for he has invariably sung as he sees. This fact, I think, was at the back of the mind of a writer in *The Bookman* some years ago, who awarded him " a foremost place among our living poets." To read his verses is a veritable tonic, for they are full of thanksgiving for the good things of life. Joy is their keynote, and joy they communicate. The words he has used of Chaucer, the first of our typically English poets, might with equal propriety be applied to himself. " He turns continually to nature for colour whereby to heighten his expression and bear witness to his exultation in the beauty of health and the sanctity of joy. He sees the spring flowers and hears the song of the birds, and they make him glad. Her (i.e., nature's) sweetness and happiness are infectious, and a virtue is constantly passing out of her for him to gather who will."

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[1] I cannot, of course, discuss the plays here. Most of them contain exquisite lyrics exactly in tune with the emotion of the scenes in which they occur; and the themes of *Abraham Lincoln* and *X=O* are founded on high poetic conceptions.

FREDERICK T. WOOD.

[Earlier articles in this valuable series of studies of contemporary poets have dealt with Mr. Edmund Blunden, Mr. Laurence Binyon and Sir William Watson; copies may be obtained for 2s. 6d. each post free.]

MUSIC AT NIGHT

CHORDS coppergreen chase round and round
The shaded drawing-room
While silken rains fly rippling down
The magic ivory tomb.

The lamp's unflinching steady glow
Tinges rose her hands
Whiter than the milky keys
Whereon her touch expands.

A poppy's cultivated head
Not so black as hers
Hangs down a tall blue Eastern vase
While Lara sits and purrs.

The music ripening into gold
Rolls along the floor
Taking wings of purple thread
Flies through the garden-door.

I thought I saw the nightblue sky
Rent right across in two
And through the fissure seemed to be
Eternity come true.

ROBIN ANDERSON.

NIGHT PIECE

" ONLY the sea,"
The man said, and the girl beside him yawned,
and they walked quickly back across the sand,
back to the pier's bright lights and blaring band.

Upon the sea a myriad colours dawned
and died : topaz and amethyst, pale chrysolite and jade,
and deep-fired emerald, all overlaid
with the smooth lacquer of the chill moon's light. . . .

" Only the sea," he said, and she had yawned.

JOHN ROE, R.N.

A SONG OF COURAGE

MUSING he sits, his manuscript spread out before him,
Clear lies the page, no note is written upon it,
No music beats in his brain, no melody haunts it.
Head pillowed on hand he sits there brooding; and
dreaming
His thoughts go back to those early makers of music,
Guido, the monk of Arezzo, Huebald, Palestrina.
Philosophers, teachers were they, and metaphysicians,
Those men of past ages, the great mediaeval musicians
Who first sought to write down their music, a guide to
their pupils.
Idly he draws on the page the square notes as they made
them,
Then traces a circle, the sign to them of the perfect,
The symbol of mystical Godhead, the Holy, the Triune,
By which they denoted the time they called perfect the triple.
He erases a part, and there lies the circle, but broken;
The imperfect circle which stood for the duple, the march
time,
The steady pulsating beats which men ever march to.
And it seems that he hears the sound of men endlessly
marching,
The thud of their footsteps which pass o'er the earth
without ceasing,
The rhythmic beat in which heartbeats pulse with the
footbeats,
Until it rises like thunder and throbs in his ear drums,
The steady tramp, the constant beat,
The sound of countless marching feet,
From time they leave their swaddling clothes
Till muffled in a winding sheet
They pass, in long procession set,
First are begotten, then beget
Others to take their place when they
Must pass into the darkness. Yet
They do not flinch—who know not ought,
Whence they have come, or why were wrought,
If they must live eternally
Or if with death all things are nought.

It comes like a great flash of light,
The courage of these men who might
Shrink back from the abyss, yet they
Step fearlessly into the night.

Musician, write. Come, seize your pen,
Write of the courage of these men,
Sing of their splendid gallantry,
Write them a song of valour then.
O surely if a God there be
He will look understandingly,
See something Godlike in their strength
And say " They are akin to me."
And thus seeing them, will grant them a time of fulfilment,
The broken circle be rounded once more to completion,
The imperfect be moulded at length into lasting perfection.

I. M. MILLS.

G. B. S.

Malvern, 1932.

YOUNG, he threw a torch across a sky,
Befogged and clouded.
Men, their rushlights quenched,
Stretched eager hands, and, if their tapers guttered,
What matter, so they burned.

Now, old and eloquent,
The gloaming falls around him as he speaks.
Youth springs from crag to crag,
Peak-wards in the morning sun.
Age, at a gentle pace,
Follows the sloping valley-path
Into the shadows.
Sure-footed still, deep-breathed and keen of sight,
The valley-way becomes to him a Pisgah,
Where, unafraid, he faces
Truth and serenest Wisdom.

GRACE CARLTON.

ARMISTICE DAY, 1932

RETURN, return, resume the broken thread,
the pitcher shattered at the well repair :
awake—arise—innumerable dead—
be re-incarnate, vital, and aware.

Return ! We are not fit that you should die :
We make no profit of the gift you gave.
Fresh armies tread the mould in which you lie,
fresh bugles blow across your common grave.

You would have lived more bravely than we do ;
run laughing all our pigmy fears toward ;
laughing have speared the dreadful dragon thro',
and split the darkness with a shining sword ;

Restored our Eden, built Jerusalem,
established the Celestial City high
above the dagger and the diadem,
above the vapours that contract our sky.

You should be living, we have lost the art ;
our limbs are paralysed, our senses numb :
No music in the stillness of our heart,
no music on our lips, for we are dumb.

You are more quick than we, your Spirits keep
Communion on the heights they used to scan ;
whilst ours like a crying child are drugged to sleep
by the plausible philosophies of Man :

Or some there are that in the heavy night
awake, and grope with timid hand, and call,
and call until exhaustion smothers fright,
finding no comfort save the enclosing wall :

Or some there are, and more with every year,
that neither wake, nor weep, nor cry aloud,
nor twist in pain, nor supplicate in fear,
still-born . . . still-born . . . their swaddling-clothes a
shroud.

Could we invoke your resurrection now,
how you would shame us with your questioning,
asking : " How fares the lovely Earth, and how
are all our dear descendants prospering,

And has the Seed brought forth an hundredfold
that all are satisfied ? " We could not show
even the buried Talent to be told,
for it was lost and rusted long ago. . . .

Ah no, come not ;—pray God you may not see
the waste and devastation we have wrought ;
the thorn-choked plant, the ivy-strangled tree,
the will deformed, the starved and stunted thought :

Pray God you may be blinded by His Light,
so that our constant gloom may seem to you
a black, opaque, impenetrable night,
hiding our utter worthlessness from view :

Pray God you may be deafened by the Song
of Heavenly Voices from terrestrial din ;
the shriek of suffering, the wail of wrong,
the loud triumphant mockery of Sin.

Come not, . . . come not ; . . . it was an idle thought,
a selfish thought, that you should come again :
Why should you leave the harbour you have sought
to dare anew the hazard of the main ?

Return no more :—It were too much to bear
the pain of disillusion in your eyes.
Leave us to meet the fate our hands prepare,
the inevitable doom our brains devise :

Leave us to trap and snare ourselves like beasts
within the machinations of our mind,
and flagellate our own tormented breasts,
and dig the pit that shall entomb our kind.

Let us be racked with fever and disease,
plague-stricken, famine-stricken, parched with thirst;
devoured by earthquakes, swallowed up by seas,
till the land be barren as it was at first.

Let Armageddon break, that age-long dread,
that we to ultimate disaster hurl'd
perish with all the race that Adam bred,
and our extermination save the World. . . .

HENRY L. LITTLER.

Heidelberg.

WILL THEY NOT HAVE PITY

WILL they not have pity on
the white hands pleading from the windows,
the fluttering, aspiring hands
that shine so white and move
like music at the windows,
praying to the darkened skies,
feeling the distant wind that blows
sadly and full of rain?

Will they not have pity on
the crystal voices,
the clear young voices
that suddenly sang from the windows,
and turned the sorrow of the prison into light
falling and breaking in silver waves against the dark trees?

Will they not with their eyes see
the prayers of our hands,
nor listen to the young voices?

Suscipe deprecationem nostram.

Free them, o free them, from the walls of the house
and let their voices rise towards the sky
and their hands be clasped in laughter across the fields of
cowslips.

MARY CROZIER.

ON CONSCIOUSNESS

TWO TERZA RIMA SONNETS, by ROBIN LAMPSON.

I

DAY in, day out, year on relentless year
  This consciousness of self pervades my being,
Never forsaking, pitilessly near,

Within me filling all ; hearing and seeing,
  Tasting, and smelling, feeling joy and pain.
Grim, palpable Persistence, past Life's freeing,

Only by grimmer Death may it be slain !
  O inescapable satiety
Of self, strong spirit vested in my brain,

Why must you like a heartbeat habit me,
  Enclose my body as its sword the sheath—
Aye, *more*, fill me as water fills the sea !

And is there no escape with final breath ?
Does this Persistence hound us after death ?

II

O inescapable dogging consciousness
  Filling my body closer than my breath,
Have pity on me through this night's distress !

Answer my prayer, although I have no faith ;
  Lay me to earth who will not cringe or kneel !
Give me the senseless Imperturb of Death—

For just this night, this hour let me feel
  Oblivion, or better, let me cease
To feel desire for it : let Lethe steal

Into my blood, and lave me in her peace !
  (. . . *Grim Mouth of Being, stop that hideous smile,*
And from your laugh's ironic leer release ! . . .)

Ah, Lethe, make me for a little while
The wave's white crest, or sunlight on the Nile.

A VALENTINE

Written in 1870 by the Hon. Mrs. Norton to her grand-daughter Carlotta Norton, aged sixteen. (The latter died in March of this year after a very saintly and beautiful life.) These unpublished verses are published by permission of her great grand-daughter, the Hon. Eleanour Norton, who holds the sole copyright.

IN a vision I beheld
Four sweet angels o'er me bending,
All my fear, their softness quelled,
Each a glad Evangel sending !

They were angels : (*that* I knew).
But, my brain, confused with dreaming,
Gave them forms which Fancy drew,
In the grave of earthly scheming.

Spring and Summer, brightly crowned,
Autumn ripe, and Winter hoary.
Emblems of life's fleeting round,
Such the shapes I saw in glory !

Spring said, " Fear not ; all her youth
Pleased to learn, and fondly guided,
Still she'll love the light of Truth,
Still from Sin be far divided."

Summer whispered, " Trust thou me
On to matron life I'll lead her,
Dear and precious shall she be,
To all ties of Home, that need her."

Autumn murmured, " She shall shine
In the path of conscious duty,
And her day's serene decline
Shall go down in sunset beauty."

Even Winter, lifting high
A torch that burned with sacred fire,
Smiling spoke, " Until she die
Never shall this light expire.

" And when earth her body waits
Angels round her soul shall rally
Pointing to the golden gates,
Far beyond Death's silent valley."

. . . . .

Then they vanished, and I woke,
Gone the glory shining o'er them,
But I know of whom they spoke
Will she keep their promise for them ?

CAROLINE NORTON.

'From "Nouna" with dear love : Sunday evening, February 14th, 1870.'

AUTUMN

I'D rather have the swift swans passing over
in a white swoon of beauty, and so lost,
than they should linger till the sightless frost
snared in a frozen lake each wide-wing'd rover.

So too might we depart ere we discover
the slow numbed senses and their bitter cost,
e'er Love's great sweeping wings by Death are cross'd
and mortal man then be no more a lover.

Yet have I heard how One endured this all,
bore the grim bondage of our human losses,
hands, feet, and heart, frozen to five red scars,
and trapp'd by hate without a City wall
yet draws all men from their cold mortal crosses
to walk with Him among the swift white stars.

HAROLD TRASK.

Members of The Poetry Society are requested to remit their subscriptions when due to save trouble and expense of frequent renewal notices, and it is also hoped that with the New Year they will introduce the Society and (or) THE POETRY REVIEW to possible new members and subscribers and otherwise co-operate with the general office in extending membership.

TO EDWIN MARKHAM

(*For his eightieth birthday.*)

MARKHAM, your eighty years are moments light
As April buds upon the twigs of time;
There winds of honied sunlight dare not stir.
A butterfly perched on a violet
Takes of the years as heavily as you;
And eighty years will come about again
And yet you will be young as April buds
Rooted in timeless vintage where the plow
Must still go under roses, still must stir
Beneath the eglantine and daffodil
The hoeman's muscled beauty and the hoe
Man has not dared thrust from his heavy hands.

Markham, you sang a stream which never ends
And eighty years are but a leaf which drops
As lightly as the feather of a thought
Upon the waters of our human woes.
Not of the serf, but serfdom was your cry
In which rebellion makes us one with God
Who dared man prove the tongue you gave his head
That he might sing salvation's summer song!
That arm which might have stayed of rigid stone
You taught to raise in protest to the skies;
Those lips all salt with sweat and fevered moan
You reddened with the fires of daring dreams;
His swollen feet you cooled in mountain streams,
His pitted eyes with ages gutted deep
In shadowy substance drank the wine of light,
Your promised freedom dropped, like stars in wells.
His low and piteous brow has caught the dawn
With mountain madness when the valleys groan
In green dissension and the forests hold
Triumphant thunder till the day reveals
Sunlight and memory and bloom between
White in new gardens of man's own release.
There will your hoeman then return his hoe
Broken, unfit to use with tractors near

Which by a finger's twist may rattle by
And bring him, grain for grain, his harvest whole !

Markham, prepare the birthday of man's soul
And measure you your own when freedom sings
Through every heart on bloody, deathless wings ;
And let your years rest lightly as the lips
Of spring upon the snowy hills of time :
Men will be long in mending shoulders stooped
And eighty years will come about again
And still you will be young as April buds
Rooted in timeless vintage where the need
For roses and for sabers comes undone :
Perhaps by that time you'll be eighty-one !

CHARLES A. WAGNER.

February, 1932.

Men and women well known beyond Germany's border can claim blood relationship with Goethe, according to the researches of the Frankfort Genealogical Society, which has just made public the result of its investigations in connection with the hundredth anniversary of Goethe's death. The researches, which extended back to the Middle Ages, disclosed among the poet's living relatives the singer Sigrid Onegin, the noted ballistic expert Fritz Rausenberger and the dramatist Walter Hasenclever. Other blood relatives were the wife of Alfred Krupp, the Grimm brothers (Jacob and Wilhelm), the philosopher and natural scientist Ernst Haeckel, the philosopher Friedrich Hegel, the flyer Manfred von Richthofen and the romanticists Friedrich and August Wilhelm Schlegel.

To the Editor of "The Poetry Review"

May I congratulate you upon the success of THE Poetry Review—" the leading poetry magazine of the world of international eminence " as the Literary Digest puts it ?

Even here in India and Calcutta some Centres have been opened. And our College is a subscriber to your esteemed magazine. It is highly appreciated by our students and some of the professors, who are interested in poetry, for the " poetry of Earth is not dead." With my good wishes, Yours sincerely,

Govt. Sanksrit College, Calcutta,
October 5th, 1932.

A. C. Basu,
M.A. (Cal.), B.A. (Lond.),
Professor of English.

DYNAMICS OF AMERICAN POETRY:—XLI

Charles A. Wagner, through having won the Edwin Markham Eightieth Birthday Prize Contest, has stepped into international recognition. We are privileged to publish in the pages of the Review his winning poem, which he read on the occasion of the Markham Eightieth Birthday Celebration at Carnegie Hall, on April 24th.

Mr. Wagner is known to the poetry-reading world by three books. His first book, *Poems of the Soil and Sea*, published by Alfred Knopf, won the prize offered by Mr. Knopf of the class of 1912, Columbia College, to undergraduates who showed promise as writers. The book appeared in 1923. Glancing over it leaves no doubt of the talent of this youthful writer, of his acute temperament and almost perfect choice of words. A line or two will prove the point:

The quiet is a crystal cup
That splinters when the birds are up . . .

. . . . .

But one must see a sunset
For words are not the same.

. . . .

Dawn will not step across the dew
With pink-white toe or velvet shoe,
Nor will blue blossoms strew the air,
Or golden flowers toss their hair again.

. . . . .

Where Love is one with Peace, and each is rest.

Charles Wagner's second book is a compilation of the prize poems in America between 1913 and 1929 and carries an introduction by Mark Van Doren, publishers, Albert and Charles Boni, 1930. It is an interesting thing that Wagner has done in this anthology, particularly for foreign readers. It reveals with so little effort the trend of American poetic writing honoured by prizes. Mr. Van Doren's introduction is significant, driving home a few truths in regard to the movement of free verse so generally sponsored a short time ago in the United States. To this writer it seemed to unveil the fact that free verse was not a mark of exhaustion, of careless or degenerate conclusion, but rather a virile note.

In Charles Wagner's last book, *Nearer the Bone*, the reader recognises striking ability. One could wish that the years ahead will bring him a more universal appeal through digging a little deeper into history outside of the personal record of a man's heart. Undoubtedly this will come. John Erskine introduces this book and echoes the expressed sentiment: "I count on Mr. Wagner to do splendid work; he grows out of youth into his full talents. Meanwhile these first volumes of his are among the most promising of our day." Robert Frost says: "Your work should make people feel where they are hit and who's hitting them." And Erwin Edman: "The book is superbly singing and alive." To quote from the jacket: "Born on the East Side of New York, Charles Wagner spent his childhood in Lowell, Massachusetts, and began his schooling there. When he returned to New York, he completed grade and high school; spent two years as a riveter in the Newark Bay shipyards; then began the study of medicine. It was after he had transferred to the Arts course at Columbia University that he began writing and received encouragement from John Erskine and Mark Van Doren, his teachers."

I asked Wagner to say something about poetry, that I might incorporate in this review, and he has sent me the following: "Poetry is the utterance which living distils to a tragic essence. Whatever is felt is song. Whatever is experienced need not be. Whatever is felt with sufficient universality and the trip of a proper synthesis of sound is poetry.

"Men come to real poetry as a need, not a recreation. It is the same with the Bible. Here beauty achieves consummation only because the ardour is identical with a necessity. If a poet summarizes human experience with sufficient poise and intensity he will have a path beaten to his words whether he be eleven years old or five hundred years dead or thirty years neglected by criticism. Words in a line of poetry are lips which are forever red with desire and longing, longing and desire.

"Some of my lyrics and my longer poems, possibly 'Roads' and 'The Unknown Soldier' are made of the blood and tears of ten thousand deaths and rebirths, days and nights in which a moment of love died in the torment of despair and the flower of giving became rooted into humanity by the thrust of a heart-beat. So we live not days but moments and we are old who have the dregs of the bitter poison of people in us, people we have known in soul-strength, feel-outline, people whose love we have reached and told as if for their own satisfaction and, possibly, that of the world. Poetry is something like that."

Charles Wagner's poem, "The Unknown Soldier," won the Peace Contest of the *Poetry Magazine* in 1930. When Mr. Wagner brought me his books and I opened to this poem, which begins: "One man's shoulder, another man's thigh," I asked him if he gathered these remnants together from the dismemberment of war before he ended the poem. He smiled brightly and said, "Oh, yes." And we find the ending of the tenth stanza proves it:

And until Love walks in the sun
I shall not lay aside this gun—
Until the busy streets proclaim
That life and beauty are the same,
Until men's voices find the power
To call each coloured week a flower.

This book also abounds in graphic lines. A dramatic poem entitled

" The Widow Collins," ends with the following :—

We try to think of what she said—
Of how the living ease the dead.
She finds cathedral music best,
It reaches higher than the rest,
And buys her perfumes at a store
That does not look but charges more :
And twice a day she takes a stroll
Along the parkway for her soul.

In his poem " Automatic " there are striking descriptions ; quoting from it :

Down comes the rain looking for seed,
And all the black umbrellas snap open automatic.
Wide women sail through the wet streets,
Thin men steam alongside like tugs,
Thin men, hopeless romanticists trying to get a few words in about
true love,
Wide women, too busy for the vaporous food of memory.

With lilting charm this poet finishes his " Hike " :

I do not envy lovers
When they hike past my shack.
I go a long way with them
But theirs is not my pack,
And memory is a burden
Too big for any back.

All of this and more Charles Wagner does with captivating ease. We will close with " Toward Spring " :

Toward Spring an old revolt
Will beat upon my brain
And I'll be hill-thirsty
For woodland shacks again.

I look for a hard fight,
A go I'll not forget
Toward Spring, with the warm nights
And red lips warmer yet.

I look for some trouble
When Spring comes tearing down—
Yes, plenty of trouble
In this old, brainy town.

Jessie St. John's first book, *The Fruit of the Tree*, is charmingly presented by the Stephen Daye Press, Brattleboro, Vermont, and in its thirty-two pages holds some good work. The book opens with a sonnet sequence for Autumn. The third follows :

This lovely shape of sorrow has not form
Nor substance to attend the path I go ;
It will disperse before the roots lie warm
That now are cooled by waters of the snow.
This grief for the impermanent things that die
Is but a shape of elemental mist
Whose still wing will as ultimately fly
As any falcon fluttering at the wrist.

Now that the wheat is gathered into sheaves,
The orchard empty, and the vine betrayed,
I hear the brittle sound of blowing leaves,
Remembering their greenness and their shade.
This lovely sorrow lies on me to-night
As weightless as the frost lies, and as bright.

And the Sextet in the fifth sonnet :

The torch is lit in each invaded place,
And will prevail through every changing hour ;
It burns as burns the beauty of a face
Deprived of snood, unpetaled of its flower
Of bright dishevelled hair, but still the same,
No more to cool than any other flame.

This writer does not descend to exaggeration in the hope of capturing the reader. In her poem called " A Thing You Could Not Touch," six stanzas long, the wistful note in the last three is delicately expressed :

A thing you could not touch was there—
A thing you could not see ;
But beauty stood her length away
From every bush and tree.

The sycamore that long had been
My solace and escape,
Stood blind and inarticulate—
A strange and wooden shape.

His words slipped over me like rain
Upon the path of sudden greys.
My step with his—but not my mind,
We walked along our separate ways.

The word " painting " we find in the first three lines of " Do You Remember ? " :

Have you forgotten how amber and thin was the sunlight
That lay on the red-bud along the lane,
And its petals falling like a red bird's feather ?

Wings Against the Moon, by Lew Sarett (Henry Holt & Co.) is the fourth book by this talented writer. We think well of Mr. Sarett—his life of woodsman-poet in the forests of the Lake Superior country, his experience as a life-saver, a teacher of wood-craft, a naturalist, a guide in the Canadian North, and a U.S. Ranger in the Rocky Mountains fits him for his task of real and racy writing. With funds earned by his work in the woods he attended several universities and became a professor at Northwestern University. The Indians in their adoption of him have given him the name of Lone Caribou.

American from cover to cover, he takes us with him in his adventurous wanderings. From " Cattle Bells," the fourth stanza :

A valley of waters that softly talk of dreams,
Of the slow sweet enterprises of little streams,
Of their solemn concern with every woodland thing
  Lingering to bathe a paw, a wing.

From " Peeled Poplar," the last seven lines :

Oh, there are hours
When I can scarcely speak—
So sharp is my delight
In touching cool wet white,
When peeled wet wood is pressed
Against my burning cheek
Or touches my hot breast.

A four-line poem " So Like a Quiet Rain " illustrates how constantly he turns for terms of comparison to the woodlands :

So like a rain she seems, a soothing rain
Tapping cool fingers on a window-pane,
And dropping syllables more slow and soft
Than the talk of sleepy pigeons in a loft.

From " Fox-Heart " these lines bring us the chill and the charm of a wanderer's wayfaring :

At last the candles spluttered and went out.
We fell asleep, within our hearts the faint
Far echoes of a wolf among the hills,
A lonely coyote baying at the moon,
Calling to all the slumbering silver world,
Calling to every pricked-up silver ear.

. . . . .

And when December stars the vault of night
With incandescent ice, and the snow-dust creaks
And crunches under foot, and not a sound
Shivers the hollow air, the hollow sky—
Never a word is uttered, never an oath,
Or song to break the spell upon the crew—
Until a something in the starlight knocks

Upon the window ; we fling aside the door,
Always—to let the frozen wind come in.

Mr. Sarett's letter gives us his own favourites in this book. He tells me, " There is much that I should like to say about *Wings Against the Moon*, but I shall not comment on the book, except to suggest that it is very dear to me. My favourites ? What a task you set me ! Can one name the favourites among one's children ? I have many favourites in this book : ' Clipped Wings,' ' Broken Drake,' ' Mountain Hamlet,' ' To an Ugly Whelp in a Litter of Wolves,' ' Hollyhocks,' ' Impasse,' ' A Dog's Life,' ' Oak,' ' Night Letter,' ' Fox-heart ' and several others. There is one child in this book—a boy with wide, grey, steady eyes, slow of speech and slow of walk ; his name is ' Cattle Bells.' Nobody will ever know how dear that boy is to me."

Marian Gause Canby's *High Mowing* is her first book (Houghton Mifflin). The poems have appeared in periodicals as widely discriminative as the *New Yorker*, *Scribner's* and the *Yale Review*. " Explicit " is well done. The rebellious note :

No love shall own me !
This my sinew, this my bone
And ripened flesh are all my own.
No love shall own me.

No man shall take me !
Which would dare to fan or slake
Fires that only Life may take ?
No man shall take me.

Death shall not find me !
When I go I'll leave behind
All the things that Death can find.
Death shall not find me.

" This Day " is wistful and charming. The first eight lines follow :

This day has been too sensitive in thought,
Too intricately wrought,
With my own living sense
Threaded in vein-like red and blue, intense
Upon deep colours of experience.
Not one word spoken but lifted echoes in
My too attentive mind, a wraith-like din
Of voices gone, steps halted long ago—

The Stratford Company of Boston present *The Light of Gravere*, by John Harolde. " The title poem is mysterious and fantastic, tragic, yet simple and delicate." It is the story of a man whose passing leaves the world barren for those who loved him. This shadow falls across all lives, and touching are the following lines:

> But there is one who has escaped this taint of age,
> The envy of king and saint and page,
> 'Tis that rose that gently bends and spills,
> The rarest fragrance from the window sill;
> It fought life eagerly from a meagre crack,
> And bled its bounty to fill the gap,
> When Nature provides a time to die, it shall not clutch the air and sigh——

A new magazine called *College Verse* has been successfully launched this "depressed year." It is favourably sponsored and patronized. The latter part of the magazine carries observations on poets and publishers, interestingly surveying the field. Members who join the College Poetry Society as undergraduates may contribute to *College Verse* for two years after graduation, whether they remain in college or pursue other lines of work. This is an excellent undertaking and we may expect fruit from this tree. That in this depressed year reading of all kinds has increased is demonstrable. Having a friend who opened a year ago a book shop, which included a circulating library, I have been able to know at first hand that there has been more reading of all kinds of books during these anxious days of financial pressure than heretofore. The unquiet minds stunned by the fear of further cuts in income, the actual shadow of disaster hovering about them, have remained at the unquiet firesides and reached for books. There is always a bright lining—here is one. The theatre, which in New York is too often disappointing, has been drawing fewer—the library more.

The first book of a Vassar girl came to hand this morning—*First Harvest*, by Sabra-Frances Rollins (Dorrance, Philadelphia). It is a very good example of the talent that is finding its voice in our colleges and universities. Why shall I tell you her age? You would know it from the verse, which is charming. Her publishers make the following statement on the flyleaf:

> "Her ancestry goes back to the Norman Diccon's, or de Caen's, who went to England with William the Conqueror, and to John Dickenson, the sixteenth-century English pastoral poet. Nathaniel Dickinson, the pilgrim, came to America in 1630, settling finally in Amherst, Massachusetts.
>
> "She is choosing the public as her audience early, in order to grow up with it."

The cry of the blood is strong in us all and there are noteworthy examples in Miss Rollins' first book. Here in America—"the melting pot"—the roots of most of us strike down into distant soil which is scarcely recognized in the come and go of daily life, but, when the eye first meets the cliffs of Dover, spiritually speaking, one falls on one's knees with the sweep of emotion—this writer's experience. In Miss Rollins' "Call of England" she expresses the same emotion:

England—England, your blood beats in my veins;
Its ceaseless throbbing bids me back
To fuchsia-bordered lanes,
Back to purple-heathered moors
And eerie, wooded downs,
Hills with time-silvered abbeys for
Their ancient, well-worn crowns,
And tender valleys cradling
Tiny thatched-roof towns.

England—England, the love I bear for you
Is deeper than the seas are deep
That toss between us two,
So guard your lanes, hills, downs and moors,
Year on successive year,
Until to them my truant course
My stars relenting steer.
I swear to God I shall return
England—do you hear?

The distinguished poet and philosopher, Barbara Young, has a poem in this morning's *Times*, which also illustrates the call of the home-soil. "Song For Devon" gives us the same note of recognition of the spell of ancestry and its setting. The first verse follows:

As I rode up from Plymouth Town
A silver rain came shining down;
So bright it ran, so soft it fell,
It turned a tune, it wove a spell.
And oh, the rust-red Devon soil
Whereon my Grandsire spent his toil;
And oh, the tears that tinged the mist
With tints of gold and amethyst!

We find in Miss Rollins' book many sonnets singing of love and the racy delights of being twenty. Again we find her in England, this time strolling down an English lane. The octave and sextet of the first series follow:

We dreamed an idle dream one happy night;
That you and I would sail across the seas
Together to our land of Heart's delight;
Would penetrate the Gothic mysteries
Of dim cathedrals hand in hand, and pause
With righteous awe before the ancient tombs
Of kings and queens, knights killed in holy cause,
And saintly bishops gone to golden dooms.

. . . . .

You go abroad alone, but followed by
The ghost of one who clung unto a dream
Her breath along the lanes will be a sigh
Her form in vaulted aisles a fitful gleam,
Yet—since you've found such certain sanity,
I do not think that you will hear or see.

There is a Sonnet Sequence written after seeing *The Barretts of Wimpole Street*, and reading again Elizabeth Browning's *Sonnets To the Portuguese.* Defiantly in the sextet she comments :

I love you as I love you. Be content
With that and do not ask me to define
A depth of feeling whose sole measurement
Is time. I'll say but this ; all that is mine,
And good, I give you hostage in my youth
Till age shall prove our love a lie or truth.

And when the chill thought arrives are the falling away of the glad dress of early ecstasy, when :

Time will leave silver signals in our hair
And moderate the proud tilt of our heads
Less surely shall we walk, with greater care.

When those bleak days close in, oh, promise me
You will not leave me, but will help me find
A substitute for our lost ecstasy ;
No passion of the heart, but of the mind,
Adventure in the intellect's broad lands,
So shall we meet death standing with clasped hands.

Of such is the kingdom of *College Verse*, where the silver slant of rain in spring, glimpses of skies, dawn tipped and sunset died, and love's silences and the treasured ecstasy of quanient hours abound.

Vachal Lindsay speaks a good word for *Boy With a Silver Plow* by Dennis Murphy : " Good poems and excellent craftsmanship," and also Lew Sarett : " What a really fine first book ! it is marked by genuine beauty." This youthful poet is the seventh son of an Ozark farmer, Missouri, and all his ancestors came from Ireland. Graduating with honours from the Missouri University his Master of Arts degree was given him in 1927, and since then he has been an instructor of England at the Northwestern University. This book was chosen from 176 book manuscripts as the most worthy of publication by the Kaleidoscope Press, Dallas, in 1931.

The title poem is significant :

Will no alien plowshare turn
An unforgotten furrow by ?
Is it folly that I yearn
A foolish boy that once was I,

A boy who found a lark's feather
And held it lonesome to his heart?
How many hours we are together!
How many æons we are apart!

No meadow lark continues winging:
No transient plow and furrow run—
Only a boy left idly singing
And all his plowing still undone.

"For Every Lover":

Delicately dusk will leave
The shadowy alders along
The pool, and the pool will weave
Patterns of bloom and bird song.

Dusk will dim into evening
And evening pale into night,
And a broken song die sorrowing
On a pool, once alder-white.

Comes a time to every lover
When love must delicately
Surrender one bloom and another
And lose the last birdcry.

It is good to think at night when one turns one's cheek to the cool pillow, that the desire to write poetry, the love of it and the writing of it is springing up all over these United States.

ALICE HUNT BARTLETT.

The Future of Poetry

To the Premium Editor.

Do you sometimes wonder about the future of poetry? I mean whether it has a future.

The poet of to-day seems to be born three centuries too late. This generation, rushing through a maddening maze of noise, speed, and machinery, has not its ear attuned to the softer melodies of the soul. There are no "green pastures and still waters." Nothing but the hard cold, cobblestones of materialism and torrents of unrest, in which the flower of poetry cannot find root. Prose writers are tolerated, but why is the poet the butt for the world's scornful witticisms?

I have been reading *Thomas Hardy's Later Years*. Do you think what he says there about poetry is prophetic? He says . . . "If, as has been lately asserted, only the young and feeble League of Nations stands between us and the utter destruction of civilization . . . the thought is depressing, that should such an overturn arrive, poetry will be the first thing to go, and probably will not revive again for many centuries. Anyhow, it behoves young poets and other writers to stave off such a catastrophe" (page 213).

Bournemouth, Nov. 25th, 1932. Yours faithfully, E.M.W.

THE POETRY LIBRARY

SEEMINGLY prolific in new books, the autumn season has produced very little that is noteworthy in new poetry, the most attractive new volumes being reprints or translations or commentaries. Particularly fascinating is Claude Colleer Abbott's *Early Mediaeval French Lyrics* (Constable, 15s.), which deserves more notice than we can give it at the moment, and very warmly welcomed should be the Cambridge University Press's *Paradiso of Dante Alighieri* (10s. 6d.), with a translation in triple English rhyme and an introduction by Geoffrey L. Bickersteth (the editor and translator of a poetical as well as scholarly edition of the poems of Leopardi some years ago) —a book that should be very dear to all sincere lovers of poetry who believe with Cardinal Manning that "post Dantis Paradisum nihil restat nisi visio Dei." The translation accompanying this reprint, it is pointed out, is primarily intended for the reader. In his introduction, Mr. Bickersteth discusses Dante's technical artistry and the use of the terzarima measure in English as well as Italian. Apropos, the *Inferno*, *Purgatorio* and *Paradiso* have just been included by the Oxford University Press in their World's Classics, the Italian text being faced by an English terzarima version by Melville B. Anderson, a final redaction with a copious index, to a translation published in 1921.

About a year ago nine of the younger English poets—men under thirty—published a volume called *New Signatures* for which Michael Roberts wrote a critical introduction. The book was well reviewed and all of the contributors have done something to enhance their reputation since. Now comes Mr. John Gawsworth with the sincerest form of flattery: *Known Signatures* (Rich and Cowan, 5s.), a collection of new verses by eighteen poets (some of them are still alive) and Mr. Gawsworth himself. In justice to Mr. Gawsworth's reputation as a critic, we must say that his verses were included only at his publisher's request. Miss Sitwell and Mr. Blunden contributed plausible verses (not their best and probably not their most recent work); Mr. Hugh MacDiamid contributes a good poem (what on earth is it doing here? It might well have been in new signatures); for the rest we have odds and ends by Ernest Dowson, Lord Alfred Douglas, W. H. Davies, Lionel Johnson and others. In all cases (says Mr. Gawsworth) the poems are *new* poems, new to the public at large. But they are traditional, he asserts. So were the poems in *New Signatures* (a volume which Mr. Gawsworth detests so much that although he quotes extensively from it and includes in his own book poems by men who praised it highly, he never mentions it or its editor or contributors by name). But Mr. Gawsworth appears to know very little of tradition. The Imagists and (God bless us!) Parnassians he describes as post-war poets. Perhaps he was thinking of the Crimean War. Well, well, Homer was a post-war poet too, and, like Mr. Blunden and Mr. Auden, he was not afraid to write of war and the disillusions of peace.

Ariadne, by F. L. Lucas (Cambridge University Press, 8s. 6d., 450 numbered copies) is an exercise in versification of a kind to which we are well accustomed. The style wanders between Pope and Tennyson, yet misses the concise statement of the one and the effective simile of the other:

> Twice, since the dawn, far down the Athenian plain,
> Had stormed the long white lances of the rain,

No, they are old stage-properties, these " long white lances " and useless, too, for most of us are more familiar with parallels of slanting rain than with the accoutrements of ancient chivalry. The narrative passages are better: there is a very readable speech by Theseus to Ariadne as they sail past Crete, but at the end the book relapses:

> And yet no matter, though forgot,
> So life's long pageant perish not—
> If of the fair and brave that fell,
> Sometimes is left a tale to tell.

The fastidious reader may think of a line of poetry: " Of Adam's brow, and of the wounded heel,' and whisper dog. But hush, the sentiment is, after all, very respectable and perhaps some people prefer their sentiments in not-too-sophisticated couplets.

Mr. J. C. Squire is also respectable in verse, though he is said to have voted Labour at least once. In a preface to *The Face in Candlelight and other poems* (Heinemann, 6s.) he threatens " to refuse nothing in one's experience that seems to demand formal expression, to take no notice of fashion and none of what people will say." Well, well, Campion and Daniel said some cogent things in their courteous inquiry into the value of poetic use and custom, and history has judged Daniel to have been the shrewd in judgment and Campion (betraying all his principles) the master in poetic practice. Posterity will be no more intelligent than ourselves, but will repeat, parrot fashion, the reasoned opinions of the demonstrable sensitive and reasonable critics of to-day: and that same posterity (thanks to its mentors) will find Mr. Squire's pronouncements a little obvious: " the best comic verse, very probably, is comic poetry which could only have been written by men capable of deep emotion and sympathetic thought " and Mr. Squire's poetry will be tested by the people who like it: if *they* possess the sensibility which will enable them to explain to the coming generations *why* they think it good, if in fact they belong to the future, then Mr. Squire's poems will take the place which Mr. Bax recently claimed for them. Some of us are willing to bet our boots that they won't. Mr. Squire has written one or two poems which, to the present reviewer, seem to be good, but for the most part Mr. Squire's work is sound middle-class journalism:

Catullus, Propertius,
Tibullus and Ovid,
Oh, the sighs that they sighed
  To the girls they adored !
And in Egypt, Assyria,
Greece, Babylonia,
How they sang—and the women
  Were none of them bored.

It is less subtle, it expresses less of our feelings, than Calverly in a similar vein, and it is kinder to judge Mr. Squire by this, than by his reminiscences of Donne. To appreciate Donne you have to be as wide awake, intellectually and emotionally, as possible and at all times he shocks you into recognizing that he has something to say : to appreciate some of Mr. Squire's poems in this volume you have to feel rather easygoing and vaguely sentimental. Even so, Mr. Squire is a poet, he has an ear for the overtones of words (which painstaking Mr. Lucas has not) and in his Sonnet to a lady beginning to learn Greek there are some hard, clear images :

Dark Delphi and the cold Caucasian rock,
Aulis and Tauris and the Scythian shore,
And those dim eaves where Proteus herds his flock
May greet you as a shining visitor.

But in *Resurrection*, a theme from Ezekiel (can these bones live) is handled less effectively than it was by the prophet and by another modern poet, Mr. T. S. Eliot.

Mr. W. M. Davies is less ambitious. His book, *Poems* 1930–31, is charmingly produced by Jonathan Cape and delightfully illustrated by Elizabeth Montgomery. It is an excellent book to give to people not very interested in poetry but anxious to have a poetic-looking book about the house. Mr. Davies continues to ruminate with pigs and cows. This simple-minded versifying can be very delightful, but it would be easier to judge if Mr. Davies would label his efforts more helpfully. Thus : *Epitaph on John Keats*,

Some poets die consumed by love
Of their own dreams—Here lies John Keats
Who died because he had no power
To stop his craving after sweets.

Until we know whether this should be labelled Epitaph (in the manner of Mr. Wolfe's Cursory Rhymes[1]), it is impossible to say whether this is a bad poem or only a bad joke.

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[1] E.g., Here lies G. K. Chesterton
Who to heaven might have gone,
But didn't when he heard the news
That the place was run by Jews.

No, if this is the best which can be produced by what the Marxist calls traditional bourgeois literature, let us at all costs have a revolution.

Mr. Thomas Moult has again collected *The Best Poems of the Year* (Jonathan Cape, 6s. net). Nothing by Allen Tate, T. S. Eliot, Stephen Spender, Richard Goodman or Hart Crane is included, nor is Hart Crane, who died during the year, mentioned in the dedication. Mr. Moult relies upon the *Criterion* and *Poetry* (Chicago) to supply him with a few poems which will give him a reputation for catholicity: he does not include anything by the young English communist poets, some of whom are very remarkable. Perhaps he is right: it is very hard to appreciate their work without being bored by the *Best Poems*, and vice-versa. In five or six years time it will be easier to see which way public taste is moving. A volume like *Best Poems* must, if it is to be successful, keep behind the taste of its public. This Mr. Moult does very successfully and no doubt hundreds of copies of *Best Poems* will be given away this Christmas.

The *Lyric Plays* by Gordon Bottomley (Constable, 5s.) are lovely, singing things, written partly for actors and partly for a verse-speaking choir, after the Greek tradition. The innate poetry in the idiom of the Scottish peasant affords excellent material for the choruses. Inanimate objects are also given speech . . . as in " Culbin Sands," where the terror of the great sand drift of 1694 is insinuated in a way that is both sinister and beautiful :—

The Winds . . .
Trees, I am here : tall trees, are you hearkening ?
The Trees . .
You we have known : we have feared your embracing,
Torturing, strengthening, in age overthrowing :
But what is this beyond our knowing ?
The Winds . . .
From a new place in the mountains racing,
The low-flying cloud and the great gull chasing,
I leap and come.
Thwarting the waves, stripping their cresting ;
Raising the sand from an age-long resting ;
Labouring against it, heaving and lifting,
Heavy in flight with it, panting and breasting
A moving wall of it settling and drifting. . . .
The Trees . . .
The storm-cock is dumb.
The sand is rising
From bole to bough.
The Winds . . .
And man hides in fear, but the sea and I sing ;
And the corn-lands are hidden by dry sand now.

The Trees . . .
Light and wounding
Is the sand's touch.
The Winds . . .
It does not matter : the wind is yet sounding,
And the sand is to cover you overmuch.
The Trees . . .
Bark, needles, and next year's bud
It strips, and we bleed. . . .
The Winds . . .
The sand still rises and pours in flood,
And that is all the healing you need.

The plays themselves are poignant or tragic episodes taken from Scottish history and legend.

Mr. T. C. Murray, in his Three-Act Play, *Michaelmas Eve* (Allen and Unwin, 3s. 6d.) knows the beauty of idiom of the Irish peasant speech, though he does not stress its poetry. The play has much charm and interplay of character despite a hero who is not very consistently portrayed. The early behaviour of Hugh Kearns makes it improbable that he would take the ungenerous step of marrying a faded wife for the sake of security against poverty. Messrs. Allen and Unwin have also just published a new edition of J. M. Synge's Plays. (7s. 6d.)

Little Mary Crosbie (Constable, 2s. 6d.) is a delightful tale of an Institute orphan who is adopted by a country woman, told in half-cadenced verse by Margaret Cropper. Innate poetry is again noticeable here in Susannah Winter when she says :

"I never mind
Not having neighbours ; I don't feel afraid,
I feel right friendly with trees and rocks and such." . . .
"I've got my warm fire behind me,
And my Bible afore I sleep, and a sup of milk,
And them damsons is real bonny this time o' day . . .
. . . Lilies is getting over, birds is lovely,
There's more lambs in the beck field than there was."
. . . "A little lass
To bide with me, aye, that's what I've been wanting."

The child's acute individuality has a very different effect in the two places :

So the little eight-year-old cut like a knife
Right across the ordered Institution life ;
An odd child, that you couldn't bear
When you had to have things even and square
To make the machine work decently.

and later :

Mary, trying a fresh place
For everything, with a grave face.
" My shoes would like to sit
On the staircase for a bit.
I'm turning this pot round
To show my doll a flower I've found." . . .
" Can I start my dinner with jam
And finish with this bit of ham ? "

Sometimes she got her own way,
Sometimes Susannah used to say :
" Nay, my love, not for to-day."

Mary, opening the door
With her frock put on wrong ways before,
" I thought my buttons would like to see
What happens in front of me."
" I let her be, as 'twas nothing wrong,
She put it right before so long."

It is a pity that the Institute Committee is drawn unconvincingly· Even for the sake of contrast one cannot easily accept the conventionalized type of sour piousness nor the unreasonable attempt to take Mary back.

The Production of Religious Plays is a comprehensive manual by Mr. E. Martin Browne, who is in the unique position of Director of Religious Drama for the Diocese of Chichester (Philip Allan, 2s. 6d.)—a handbook that should become increasingly useful with the revival of the association of religion with the stage. Mr. Browne recognises among other things the necessity for speech training, but we wonder on what authority he distinguishes one individual as " the best teacher in English speech ! " The somewhat limited bibliography will be found of some value in the selection of suitable plays, both mediaeval and modern. Among the latter we find Mrs. Dearmer's " Three Plays " variously entered—a slight recognition of the founder of The Morality Play Society, which may be recognised as the forerunner of Mr. Browne's activities, and was later merged in the poetic drama section of The Poetry Society, but unhappily terminated by the combined tragedy of the outbreak of the War and Mrs. Dearmer's own death in Serbia. Other POETRY REVIEWERS whose plays of this type are listed include Arthur Hood and Vera Arlett.

Tantivy Towers and *Derby Day*, published together in one volume (Methuen, 5s.), show Mr. A. P. Herbert as a humorist of decided views. Ridicule of those things and people to which he objects runs side by side with championship of all of which he approves. It is this double characteristic that sets his work, delightfully light as his touch is, on a firmer basis than simply the desire to amuse. These two plays, recently staged in London, are conceived in the same spirit, executed with equal metrical dexterity, and go excellently together into one book. Between them they contain some of Mr. Herbert's masterpieces in the light lyric line. Such gems as " We will be Bohemian, we will," " It's all for the sake of the bird, poor thing," " Nothing's been the same since I took up with orange juice," and " Oh well, we mustn't grumble," are already familiar to readers of *Punch*. Fox-hunters, food-cranks, the determinedly Bohemian set, licensing justices, the " precious " undergraduate—all these are the excellent objects of Mr. Herbert's ridicule, while the humour and philosophy and sturdy commonsense of the British working man is stoutly supported. Most of the characters in *Tantivy Towers* and *Derby Day* are, of necessity, caricatures, but in both plays the hero (Hugh, in *Tantivy Towers*) or heroine (Rose, in *Derby Day*) is a more rounded and human character, winning sympathy and affection from either audience or reader. The transitions from humour to sentiment are naturally and easily contrived, and each play forms a coherent and exceedingly entertaining whole, with *Derby Day* perhaps ranking first as regards plot construction. In short, the special charm of Mr. Herbert's work is the lightness of his touch, and the special interest of it is the force of his meaning.

We run the risk of being classed amongst the Philistines by considering the most charming anthology of the season to be George Burnett's *Book of Scottish Verse* (Methuen, 5s.), which so admirably demonstrates the Editor's own theory that the first requirement of poetry is that it should give pleasure. Nothing precious or studied or smelling of midnight oil can be found in these ten " books " of classified poems on homely and commonplace matters that are never handled in a commonplace way. They are really folk poems, simply written for simple people who delight in the ordinary pleasures and activities of life, but retain some feeling for romance and weird and wanchancy things, as well as in halesome fairin.

Other notable anthologies of the autumn include *The City Without Walls*, a very extensive and catholic collection of verse and prose setting forth the drama of human life, arranged by Margaret Cushing Osgood (Cape, 15s.), who in her 85 years filled with study and travel has gathered memories of writers, artists, musicians, scientists and historians in England and on the Continent, supplemented by remarkably comprehensive reading and research. She is an individual anthologist well qualified for her self-imposed task, imitating no predecessors and trusting to her own taste and industry.

The Anthology of Empire, compiled by Anthony Haslam (Grayson, 6s.), is another individual collection. Although dealing with a familiar field, the compiler has shown personal enterprise and judgment and got together a really remarkable and consistently fine selection of 270 poems by 150 poets, with above 200 other extracts illustrative of the course of English history and the development of the imperial spirit as well as noble incidents arising therefrom. Mr. Haslam is a genuine anthologist with a system of his own which has given him apparently great pleasure in following out and he has done his work in such a way that it should communicate a thrill to the reader.

What Messrs. Macmillan describe as *An Anthology of Poetry from Spenser to Arnold* (7s. 6d.), is a good deal more than an anthology in the usual sense of the term. This compact, expansive volume of above 900 pages is really an edited selection of the principal and most characteristic work of twelve outstanding poets of the period covered, affording the student an opportunity of comparing the poetry of different periods and following the gradual process of development in thought and style during three centuries, thus enabling the reader to cultivate, perhaps achieve, the ultimate end of all literary study—a sound judgment and enlightened critical faculty and some sense of literary taste. Helpful, sensible and concise notes are added with some general biographical and bibliographical details of each of the twelve poets included in this one volume, which we highly recommend to all schools and students of English poetry.

The Lewis Carroll Centenary is admirably rounded off by a handsome edition of his *Collected Verse* (Macmillan, 8s. 6d.), which brings together not only the old unsurpassed favourites but a dozen new poems never printed before, which make delightful reading, and a number of others collected from books now out of print and not obtainable elsewhere, the whole presenting the completion and crown of Lewis Carroll's whimsical poetry.

This new year Delgado's delightful and artistic Kipling, Punch Limerick (compiled by our friend Langford Reed), and other poetical and literary calendars will, we hope, be the marking off of happy days filled with great good humour to which they set the tune.

We regret we have had to hold over a considerable number of book reviews which should have appeared in this issue. We cannot adequately deal with the many new books within the scope of THE POETRY REVIEW *or utilise the large amount of suitable matter in prose and verse at our disposal until we can resume monthly publication, and this desirable object cannot be attained unless the publishers and others make more extensive use of* THE POETRY REVIEW *for advertising purposes. A standard periodical of the size of* THE POETRY REVIEW *must be partly dependent for revenue on advertisements and there are many advertisers who could and should use* THE POETRY REVIEW *with advantage to themselves.*

THE POETS' FELLOWSHIP:

THE PREMIUM EDITOR'S REPORTS

Again there are long lists of contributors for publication. A surprising number of authors have sent in at least one poem worthy of some commendation.

The following are the awards :—

Josephine Hughes for her poem "Olivet." A simple form of verse has been used to convey to the reader a wonderful strain of music.

Olive Baxendale for two very fine sonnets.

Harold Trask for two sonnets (one with coda) both powerful and endowed with an austere form of beauty.

Beresford Richards for a short lyric "Resurgent," strong, concise and intensely sincere.

A. D. L. Wilson for "Water-lilies."

T. E. Casson for "The Quest." Both these latter poems have the qualities characteristic of their respective authors, and well known to readers of The Poetry Review.

Highly Commended :

E. F. Alden, Haddenham ;
Lily Barry, Montreal ;
M. Chamberlain, Leicester ;
I. Sutherland Groom, Bristol ;
Allan Hadfield, Knaresborough ;
H. W. Household, Cheltenham ;
E. L. Kinloch, Glasgow ;
Irene H. Lewis, St. Leonard's ;
R. McKie, Brighton ;
G. E. Merrick, Warminster ;
T. Pittaway, Frome ;
Nancy Pollok, Lanark ;
M. Rees, Pembroke ;
Bertha M. Skeat, Sedbergh ;
H. M. Slade, Ramsgate ;
Lucy M. Taylor, Florence ;
D. Tindall, Aberdeen ;
Margaret E. Milnes Walker, Funchal ;
N. C. Yendell, Exeter.

Commended :

Honor Barralet, Hatfield Peverel ;
A. T. Brown, Wandsworth ;
Herbert Burkitt, London, E. ;
M. Carpenter, Caterham ;
L. Cole, Hereford ;
Albert E. Dewey, Wandsworth;
F. Engleheart, Colchester ;
K. Etheridge, Carmarthen ;
Penelope E. Goodman, Belvedere, Kent ;
Graeme Hay, London, N.W. ;
H. E. Holland, London, N.W. ;
C. M. Jeans, Dorking ;
W. A. Keeling, Hove ;
Doris Major, Hendon, N.W. ;
Ida M. Mills, Whetstone ;
Margaret Pollard, Worthing ;
Violet Rawnsley, Anacapri ;
Clyde Robertson, New York ;
John Ryn, Oxford ;
D. H. Silver, Bedford ;
G. M. Starkey, Folkestone ;
Mabel K. Toovey, Amersham ;
C. J. M. Turner, Shaftesbury ;
Edith M. Walker, Bournemouth;
M. Y. Watson, Seaham Harbour.

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[1] A new premium announcement will be found on cover page iii.

THE ORMSBY PREMIUM AWARD

As was quite to be expected, entries for the Ormsby Premium were received from all parts of the world, and particularly from Canada and the United States. Ten contributors submitted considerably better poems than any of the others, and at the head of these are placed Winifred Gérin (*née* Bourne), Paris; Basil Harvey, London, W.1; Catherine Parmenter, Colorado, U.S.A. (between whom Mrs. Ormsby's premium is divided), and Eleanour Norton (London, W.1), to whom the additional prize kindly provided by Mrs. Ormsby—the Collected Poems of Sir William Watson—is allotted.

The other six are highly commended:—T. E. Casson (Newton-le-Willows), for *Epithalamium*—a very powerful work, but more concerned with passion than love; C. M. Jeans (Dorking), *Oriental Love Song*—very good of its kind; Doris Major (Hendon), *Love's Silence*—exquisite sextet, the octave marred by being rhymed all on one note: "know," "fold," etc.; Arthur Smith (Wanstead), *The Vale of Memory*—beautiful, and a well-made sonnet, had there only been a pause between the octave and sextet it would have ranked much higher; M. Stewart (Bromley), *How shall we sing of Love?*—a good sonnet; perhaps a little pedestrian here and there; Lucy Taylor (Firenze, Italy), *There Shall be Tears*—a mystical poem, very lovely, even if somewhat reminiscent of D. G. Rossetti.

It is notable that the better and more expressive poems on this subject of love were almost all in sonnet form, continuing the Shakespeare tradition, and a selection therefrom is printed in this issue. We hope to publish the other poems mentioned later.

The adjudicator commends the following contributors for one or another of their poems:—Irene Bell (Stockton-on-Tees), Greta Briggs (Gothenburg, Sweden), H. T. J. Coleman (Vancouver), Mary Gamble (London, S.W.11), Julia Green (Los Angeles, California), Alice Harper (Vancouver), Dr. Harper (Vancouver), Marjorie Holben (Edmonton), Phyllis Lubbock (Eastbourne), Edith Merick (Washington, U.S.A.), Kathryn Munro (Toronto, Canada), Jane Nott (Bristol), Marguerite Pollard (Worthing), Nancy Pollok (Lanark), John Purdie (Paisley), Morwyth Rees (Pembroke Dock), Beresford Richards (Athabasca, Canada), Bertha Skeat (Sedbergh), R. C. Thomas (Temple, E.C.4), Edith Walker (Bournemouth), Evelyn Watson (Buffalo, U.S.A.), and Elizabeth Wild (California, U.S.A.).

D.U.R.'s *Gone Away*, a hunting play in three acts, was broadcasted from the Northern Regional on December 3rd. The Director says it is one of the finest plays he has had for a long time.

A report of the Poetry Recital by holders of the Silver Medal seeking to qualify for the Gold Medal of The Poetry Society, at which Mr. Ernest Milton awarded five medals, will appear in our next issue.

AN EVENING OF MID-JUNE

THERE is a hush, and time is stayed on this
Warm, windless, scented evening of mid-June,
Long wished, long waited for. Oh, pity it is
'Twill end so soon.

Look where the low light lingers on the hills,
As it would tarry bidding Earth goodbye,
And robes in silver sheen the vestal rills
That round her lie.

Would you not say some mighty lover came,
Swift as the light, from heaven to claim his bride,
And held her in this hour with wings of flame
Close to his side?

'Twas so, the story runs in Egypt's lore,
The Sun-god left his heaven to visit Earth,
His bride each year anew, and so her store
Of corn had birth.

And here on this June evening still they meet;
Then sadly part to go their separate ways,
Until the year's full circle shall complete
Its tale of days.

Torment of gale and frost and icy shower,
Lost in her loneliness, Earth undergoes,
Ere to her lover in conception's hour
She gives the rose.

When from her winter sleep she slowly wakes
(The sleep like death and the awakening pain)
It will be long before the dawning breaks
Of hope again.

Clouds of forgetfulness have overcast
All memory of the love of yester year,
Nor shall she dream of the Sun-god's arms till the last
Spring flowers appear.

She tends the violet heart-whole, a maid,
For the wonder of her magic fills her mind ;
And when with primroses she strews the glade,
She still is blind,

Blind to the ardour in the Sun-god's eyes,
Until a tapestry of hyacinth bells
Gives back the glory of his own blue skies
From a thousand dells.

Then at the last acknowledging his sway,
Into one peerless flower her heart she throws,
Fragrant and beautiful, against this day,
The perfect rose.

H. W. HOUSEHOLD.

EDEN FROM THE G.W.Ry.

SO motionless and quiet the old Hill lay
sleeping there far off, in the autumn sun,
warming his brown flanks as he'd always done
in the clean haze of a September day.

We passed him in a flash on the train's way.
Yet of long memories our quick thoughts spun
a valley, with the harvesting begun,
and a garden where the late roses stay.

So easy to escape this roaring train
and walk where Autumn falls in dust of gold
about that hill and garden, yet so vain,
A deeper swiftness drives the heart and brain
down the long pathway of our growing old :
it were too easy to turn back again !

HAROLD TRASK.

THE BEGGARS IN THE BAZAAR

WE walk no more ; soft wheels distilled from trees
In tropic forests bear us at our ease
Through clouds of Indian dust and folk that trudge
Home through the haze of evening ; full of grudge
We hurry by ; of grief we have no leisure
To listen to. But should we for our pleasure
Stop for a moment, bent on purchasing
Some needed thing or needless, soon a ring
Of penury around our comfort grows,
Importunate and eager to disclose
Shrunk bone-case, palsied limb or severed joint ;
At once we have a crowd to disappoint,
Finding ourselves the centre of a throng
Of life's discarded, whining out a song
Of misery, a sad confessional
Of profitless survival, dregs of all
The pain and evil there must somewhere be
That others may be happy, perchance we
Who are but as the nameless of the past,
The great consumers, truly the outcast,
The horde of every age who disappear,
Leaving no monument of toil or cheer,
No ringing words, no cleansing by the sword
Of swift decision, no sublime accord.
Yet for these friendless, even as for us
Wisdom could find a way, an exodus
Into the unsurrenderable play
Of human welfare, into the larger day,
Even as our fathers rose from surety
To healthy doubt, from doubt to setting free
The powers of heart and soul, the probing mind
To show the vastness of the unconfined
Even within our confines. We have seen
True happiness, where never bliss had been,
Among a band of lepers Love had found
Untended and unsolaced, and had crowned
With gifts of restoration ; we have known
Defeated men roused by the cheery tone
To the last victory, and callousness
Melt into tears under a caress.

And everywhere around us there are things
We thought we knew because we saw no wings
To bear them from our vision to the light
That is their meaning for a purer sight ;
And everything has names that yet await
Their glad revealers, those who demonstrate
How life's mysterious nature bids us see
For the first time what we familiarly
Have long dwelt near yet never understood
So blind are we unto the secret good.

E. E. SPEIGHT.

SWEEP A DEEP BOW

TAKE off thy cap, O cavalier,
Bow to the moon like a fairyland cat,
Courtly with sword and top boots, who bows to a queen,
With plumed hat swept to the ground,
Sweep a deep bow.

Thou hast no whiskers, nor soft ears
Nor a fine pale-blue, large-bowed tie,
No catlike face nor flowered fancy waistcoat,
Yet be as graceful as thou canst,
Sweep a deep bow.

No trace now of that fairytale cat
—His witty speeches and silken paws—
Who would dance to the queen with his deep black tail in the air.
But to the memory of his minuets
Sweep a deep bow.

No more the queen before her lovely cat
Can curtsey now. So cavalier
(While the moon's countenance smiles and is close)
Hasten, and to her clouds and stars
Sweep a deep bow !

E. P. LINSTEAD.

IN PRAISE OF TIME

POETS were wont to hate old Time,
And trace his shadow in their rhyme
The calumny of days,
—Hang their impeachments black and full
Upon mad horns, and he a bull
Loose in their garden ways.

I too have written in that cause,
Divorcing flowers from their laws,
Lamenting what had died,
—Reviling nature, Beauty's dress,
And Art her holy votaress
For being thus crucified.

Now I would all my words revoke,
And baffle with a later stroke
That early view of stress ;
For happy hours, being sped,
Bring other happy hours instead,
Timeless true happiness.

Time spreads the blush upon the rose,
And samphire on the lily throws ;
Time wears a wreath of bay ;
His eyes are fresh, his cheeks are young ;
Time hath a " fair good-morrow " tongue
Wise with old yesterday.

Time hath no malice for the beast,
And is the host of man's large feast,
Though mixed the fare he brings ;
We may the chair and victuals choose,
And some must win what others lose
At all such banquetings.

So, unto Time I dedicate
A song of honour to instate
The Master of music-years,
—A missive, that, by hostile lands

And little hates slipped through his hands,
Perusal more endears.

KEN ETHERIDGE.

UNFROCKED

GO where you will, here only must you be;
To this still cell the haunted heart of you
Will travel back—and back—across the world,
Groping the olden innocence it knew—
The dear monotonies of every day;
Your soul, how it shall famish and shall ache
Once more to grant to spent and sinful men
His blessed Body, broken for their sake!

False shepherd of the fold! yours shall it be
To starve where there is meat; shiver, to see
Life's firelight fade to ash and ghostly things
Up all your secret climb to Calvary.

And you had dreamed some surfeit of desire—
Some breathless, blazing hour, could compensate!
Sudden upon your revelry it thrusts;
That chapel bell! that spire at sunset late;
An organ peal, or pane of purpled glow—
The doves at Sabbath, crooning litanies—
Lo, you are back! Here, only, on your knees
Leaping the fevered years, the trackless seas—

Here in your place beneath the crucifix
With its limp Christ; back to your anguished plea:
" Dear son of God, of thine eternal grace,
One hour lift Thou my torment! set me free—
Thy faithless steward, of the broken troth—
To serve Thee still, as in the vanished days
Before thine altars; Lord, once more the peace
Of humble ministries and hallowed ways."

Always from heaven and earth the hidden bane;
Always you shall return; to die, again.

LAURA SIMMONS.

TIME IN THE MOUNTAINS

TIME in the mountains scarcely moves, he passes
So slowly o'er their stern, unaltering face,
He gives or takes one blade of their wild grasses,
He drops one pebble into waiting space.

Here, where the brown streams tumble to the ocean
And the grim eagle has his lofty nest,
There comes no change out of the world's commotion,
No echo of humanity's unrest.

Peak upon peak in close communion lying
With the strong stars and the enduring skies,
They seem akin to all that is undying,
And their pure winds blow straight from Paradise.

Here, where the ineffectual years pass over
As lightly as a dream, and cease to be,
Man's eager, exiled spirit may discover
A sweet foreshadow of eternity.

NANCY POLLOK.

BEAUTIFY THE INSTANT

HOW much of noble life there is enshrined
In this one aim, securely kept from haste—
To beautify the instant ! Then the mind
Will see no goodly impulse runs to waste.
For full reward we can afford to wait ;
And those results, which are not truly ours,
We cannot, with wild gestures, wring from Fate,
Yet what to us belongs, not all the powers
Of adverse circumstance shall at long length
Withhold. And easy do we find the time
Of waiting, if, with an unwearied strength,
We use our minutes to their fullest scope ;
With grace of God we still pursue our climb,
In roughest atmosphere still buoyed with hope.

T. PITTAWAY.

THE PINES

AND God said
Let there be a tree
Whose beauty will be
Beyond the wealth
Of the human tongue—
And there grew
A Cedar of Lebanon.

. . . . .

Round as His heart
God made a circle,
Straight as His arm
He drew a line—
Art in its entirety
In Him and His Stone-pine.

. . . . .

The Cypress stands a warning finger
In the face of Day,
Lest too many hours he linger
Over the display
Of his cool beauty
In the duplicity of pools.
He must make way for Stars.

And to the multiplicity
Of Stars in pools
He stands a stern sentinel—
Lest they out-crowd the Day.

. . . . .

And always wanting, never having
A sentinel Cypress tree,
A strangely satisfying thought
Has suddenly come to me.

It is—that after wishing days,
Be it soon or late,
I'll share a long, lone aisle of them
Leading from the gate.

LUCY MUNSON TAYLOR.

ON THE POETRY OF WALTER DE LA MARE

AMONG modern English poets, Walter de la Mare stands apart as almost the sole representative of what, for lack of a better term, we may call " pure poetry." For my own part I do not like the phrase because it implies that the work of writers such as Sir William Watson, Mr. W. H. Davies, Mr. W. W. Gibson, and, indeed, of the majority of living poets, is of an inferior rank, and in the true sense is not poetry at all ; and this, of course, is manifestly untrue. But the term has been used by a number of eminent critics, and bears a connotation which it is difficult to express by any other brief formula ; so I waive my scruples, and employ it here with a mental reservation. Anyone who has read much of Walter de la Mare will at once grasp what I mean by pure poetry. It is poetry that has no discernible ulterior object ; poetry that is merely meant to be pleasing, beautiful and musical ; poetry which springs from a belief that the highest function of the artist is to give delight, and not to preach or to formulate a philosophy. Now whether such a theory of poetry will bear examination I am not going to discuss ; a reader who is really interested in the question would be well advised to go to Mr. Lascelles Abercombie's book[1] and then weigh the pros and cons for himself. Suffice it to say that such poetry has been written in English—but only occasionally. Coleridge's *Kubla Khan* is an example, and some is to be found also amongst the verses of Keats. Within this small but select band of " pure poets " stands Walter de la Mare, the greatest example of modern times ; and I am not sure that I should err over-much if I said the greatest example of all time.

A mixture of English, French and Scottish ancestry, he was born at Charlton, in Kent, in 1873. His first literary work, *Songs of Childhood*, was produced in 1901, and the author, preferring his identity to remain unknown, signed himself Walter Ramal. It was not until the appearance of the prose romance *Henry Brocken* in 1904 that he used his own name. We have it on Mr. de la Mare's authority, that, so far as he can remember, one of the earliest books to make an impression upon his mind was an illustrated edition of *Gulliver's Travels*, where Gulliver was shown striding here and there amongst the pigmies of Lilliput in one picture, and in another was a pigmy himself, helpless in the midst of the giants of Brobdingnag. Now, although one should not lay too much stress upon any writer's childish reading, it does seem that there is some significance in this early predilection of our poet ; for *Gulliver's Travels*, divested of its satirical application and taken purely at its face value, as a story of fantastic adventures, has about it many of the characteristics of Mr. de la Mare's own writings. It is certainly akin to his *Memoirs of a Midget*, and there is a certain fanciful element in it which cannot fail to appeal to the child-mind. Pigmies and giants are always of absorbing interest to children ; so are stories of wonderful adventures in strange lands ; and then flying islands, and philosophers who employed attendants to hit them on the ears with " flappers " to induce them to listen to conversation, might have come from a book like *Alice in Wonderland*, or even some Eastern fairy-tale, rather than from *Gulliver*. Regarded from this point of view, Swift's work is a story of fantasy and wonder, and these are two of the chief characteristics of the poetry of Walter de la Mare. It is full of romantic beauty, often extravagantly romantic, and, like the fictitious story of Lemuel Gulliver, it seeks to carry us into a strange land where the laws of this workaday world simply do not obtain. But this time it is no Lilliput or Brobdingnag ; no, not even a Laputa, but an insubstantial, faerie dreamland, where fantasy is the sole reality. We see the whole of life and the world around us with the child mind ; that is to say, with the imaginative faculty absolutely free and unfettered, and that " willing suspension of disbelief " so dear to the romantics of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, is even more imperative than ever it was with Coleridge.

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[1] *A Theory of Poetry* (1924).

In an essay on *Poetry and the Modern Man*, written some few years ago, Robert Lynd has some very apt remarks to make upon the child and the poet. "*Ride-a-Cock-Horse*," he declares, "is poetry. Here we are in a fantastic world, a world beyond the prose of knowledge. *Polly, Put the Kettle On* contains not a word or a rhyme that makes the world a new place for us. *Ride-a-Cock-Horse*, however, and *Mary, Mary, Quite Contrary*, carry us out of our walled lives like a dream. They liberate us into a fairy-land of chiming music and flowers.

"In poetry we are continually being reborn into new fairylands. The poet in the child is a traveller into fairyland, and if at a later stage he returns to reality, he must bring back with him fire from that heaven if he is to remain a poet. He cannot be a poet of experience unless he has first been a poet of innocence. Poetry begins as a voyage among the blue seas of fancy, though it may end with the return of a laden treasure ship of the imagination into the harbours of home. . . . The child claims complete liberty of imagination, and can build for itself, at a moment's notice, a world as perfect and useless and beautiful as a soap-bubble—a world in which defiance is bidden to all the zoologists and geographers and gods of the things that are. . . . The true poet must always retain a mighty sense of inexperience—of a world outside him, of which he can know nothing save by guesses and wonder. True poetry begins with the delighted use of this sense. It creates the mermaid, the unicorn and the fiery dragon. It peoples the vague unknown with witches on broomsticks and fairies and beasts that are kings' sons in disguise. Distance has no terrors for it, and we can travel over impossible spaces either in seven-league boots or by the light of a candle. . . . Impossible trees bear impossible fruits, and for their sake an impossible princess comes over the sea."

Now all this is a most appropriate description of the poetry of Mr. de la Mare ; it indicates exactly what I mean by the child mind. The author of *John Mouldy* and *The Pedlar* is a poet who has never grown old. Who is there of us who cannot remember some old man of our childhood days who seemed to fascinate us, and around whom our infantile imagination wove all kinds of fantastic ideas? Such a person is John Mouldy.

I spied John Mouldy in his cellar,
Deep down twenty steps of stone;
In the dusk he sat a-smiling,
Smiling there alone.

He read no book, he snuffed no candle;
The rats ran in, the rats ran out;
And far and near the drip of water
Went whispering about.

The dusk was still, with dew a-falling,
I saw the Dog Star bleak and grim.
I saw a slim brown rat of Norway
Creep over him.

I spied John Mouldy in his cellar,
Deep down twenty steps of stone;
In the dusk he sat a-smiling,
Smiling there alone.

Now here at once we strike one of the most important qualities of Mr. de la Mare's poetry; the sense of awe and wonder. Read these verses again and again, and we can begin to feel that consciousness of the marvellous in commonplace things which is the possession of childhood; and we become conscious, too, of a mild kind of terror. There is a subdued atmosphere about the whole piece, which at once suggests eeriness. Sounds are dim and muffled, colours dark and blurred, while movement is silent and stealthy. John Mouldy, notice, is not seen in a sunlit room, for there he would lose all his awful fascination. He is seated in a cellar, "down twenty steps of stone," where light becomes dusk, where sounds are only whispers, and where rats creep over the floor. (There is a weird suggestion in that very word "creep.") Cannot we imagine a child telling the story with bated breath, half afraid that the old man (or the rats) would appear before him at that very instant? The creation of that impression is a masterstroke of the poet's, which appears in several other of his works.

Then there is the piece *The Pedlar*, telling how a maid was beguiled by a fairy pedlar into buying a quantity of luscious fruits and giving a lock of her hair in payment ; how, under the influence of disappointment and disillusion, she pined and faded, and all the woods and fields lamented for the passing of her beauty. Again, of course, it is purely fanciful ; but in general conception it is akin to Christina Rosetti's *Goblin Market*, while the luxurious and colourful descriptions remind one of Keats.

It may be stated, as a general rule, though a rule to which there are exceptions, that the poetry of Walter de la Mare seeks to create moods, not to call up associations. In some pieces there is certainly the slight thread of a story, but the narrative element is of very small importance ; what really matters is the atmosphere with which the narrative is surrounded. That is why so many of the verses contained in the two volumes of *Collected Poems*, published in 1920, are really meaningless in themselves, and yet are so delightful. Each poem has its own mood ; so has each volume of poems. The *Songs of Childhood* are like Blake's *Songs of Innocence*, happy and carefree. They sing of green meadows, of fairies, of birds and of buttercups, and all with a childish joy in laughter and beauty. Blake, indeed, in his earlier period of poetic endeavour, comes nearest of any past poet to the spirit of Mr. de la Mare's first volume. Those well-known lines,

> Little lamb, who made thee,
> Dost thou know who made thee ?

might just as well have been written by the twentieth as by the eighteenth-century poet.

In Mr. de la Mare's later volumes, *The Listeners* (1912), *Motley* (1918), and *The Veil* (1921) a deepening serious note is discernible, though *Peacock Pie* (1913) provides a lighter interlude. Artistically these three volumes represent the culmination of the writer's efforts, for in them that ideal fusion of form and substance, for which he had been striving in his earlier works, has reached completion, and music, metre, rhythm, content all combine to produce a perfect mood, or atmosphere. Take as an instance the poem *Nod.* What could be better, in its kind, than this, the opening stanza?

> Softly along the road at evening,
>   In a twilight dim with rose,
> Wrinkled with age, and drenched with dew,
>   Old Nod, the shepherd, goes.

We can all picture the scene from these four lines; not the details of it, it is true. We do not know what kind of a person old Nod is; we are told nothing of his stature or his character, and none of the minutiae of the countryside are given us. But we do know all that is necessary for the poet's immediate purpose. Almost every word is suggestive, and contributes to the impression. Even the name Nod tells us a great deal about the old shepherd that could not be conveyed adequately in any lengthy description. Again, notice the subdued, quiet, peaceful atmosphere. The very first word, " softly," strikes the keynote, which is sustained by the associations of " evening," " twilight," and the phrase, " dim with rose." And then the rhythm of the stanza beats out a kind of leisurely, plodding pace, just typical of a shepherd and his flock. Each stanza adds something to the impression; or rather enriches it, until the whole blends into a wonderful, etherealized picture of beauty and quiet. It is a triumph of the poetic art.

A quality that must strike one very forcibly about Walter de la Mare is his very wide sympathy, which extends to children, to old folk, to animals, and even to anyone eccentric. He is attracted by them all; and, what is more, he seems to understand them all, for his gift of versatility is truly remarkable. For him everything is full of absorbing interest; he finds wonder even in the commonplace. The material world around him is taken for granted by the average man, but Mr. de la Mare sees it as a series of most marvellous phenomena, which his poetic imagination transmutes into all kinds of fanciful forms, just as a child's imagination can transform an up-turned table, without any difficulty whatsoever, into a ship upon the sea, or the hearth-rug into a magic-carpet. I suppose one of the most common, and perhaps, if we would but admit it, the most pleasurable experiences of life, is eating and drinking. Yet few of us ever pause to consider how marvellous is this natural process of nourishing and sustaining our bodies by taking food. It is that aspect of it that our poet stresses in his whimsical piece, *Miss T.*, which opens with the lines,

> It's a very odd thing—
> As odd as can be—
> That whatever Miss T. eats
> Turns into Miss T.;

As a recent critic has remarked, it is the tremendous enigma behind this commonplace fact that so astounds the poet and calls forth his wonder. It shows that he could, had he chosen, have been a metaphysician; but as it is, he prefers to gaze and to question, not to attempt any dogmatic answer or the formulation of any definite creed. There are lines in his works[1] which express deeply religious emotions—what poet with Mr. de la Mare's power of perception could fail to be deeply religious ?—yet it is not the clear-cut, concisely expounded religion of Wordsworth. The poet of *The Listeners* and *Motley* is but groping after a faith, conscious that to grasp and to comprehend the infinite is a task beyond the power of man.

Of one fact, however, he seems certain; I mean the possibility of the transcendence of the spirit of man over the limits imposed by time and space. Continually this enters into the verses, and usually it is assumed as an axiom; it is not debated or demonstrated. Take away this assumption, and you have struck at the very foundation of the poems. You judge them by mundane standards, and this is just how they should not be judged, for the mundane is material, and the material is illusory rather than real. It is when day passes into night that one becomes conscious of a spiritual presence in nature; and so is it with life itself, declares Mr. de la Mare in *The Flight*.

> Stand watch—O days no number keep
> Of hours when this dark clay is blind.
> When the world's clocks are dumb in sleep
> 'Tis then I seek my kind.

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[1] E.g., in the poem *Before Dawn*.

Because of this deep awareness of spiritual forces, a sense of the supernatural is always present in our poet's verses, though in most cases actual supernatural phenomena do not appear. The ability to suggest the ghost atmosphere in an artistic and convincing manner is, I suppose, the supreme test of literary craftsmanship, particularly in a poet, and Mr. de la Mare emerges from the test triumphant. He is one of the few poets who, by a cunning mastery of words and sound sequences, of values and associations, has been able to create an atmosphere of otherworldliness without violating any canons of his art or giving his readers an uncomfortable feeling of incongruity. The supernatural occurs under divers guises ; in such pieces as *I Saw Three Witches*, *The Phantom*, and *Bewitched* it is pure fantasy. But in its more complex and more delicate form it appears as an extreme sensitiveness to psychic influences. The poet feels that there is a spirit world constantly about him ; that even the quietest and most deserted place is really full of invisible, psychic life, and that this unseen presence, by far the greatest, most impressive and most awful fact about the universe, is oftentimes, if not always, influencing his own spiritual being. Here the supreme example is his justly famous poem, *The Listeners*, where the very stillness and silence seem instinct with life and the loneliest spot is charged with a mystery that bespeaks a presence beyond human comprehension. The substance of the poem is well enough known. A traveller rides up to a deserted house, dismounts from his horse, knocks loudly upon the door thrice, and then, receiving no answer and discerning no visible sign of life about the place, remounts and, bidding the shadows witness that he has kept his promise to return, rides away again. Of course, there will always be those curious souls who persist in treating the poem as a puzzle, or an exercise for their ingenuity. What is the story behind it ? Who was the traveller ? What was he doing in this lonely place ? What was the promise which seems to play so important a part ? What was the reason for the empty house ? We can wonder and wonder, but we shall never find any answer to our questions. If we could, half the impressiveness of the poem would vanish, for the mystery is only deepened by this indefiniteness and uncertainty. We have stepped, as it were, into a strange world, where everything is but an echo from the unknown. The very opening of the piece is weird and eerie, with the traveller's voice vibrating through a deathly stillness.

> " Is there anybody there ? " said the Traveller,
>   Knocking on the moonlit door ;
> And his horse in the silence champed the grasses
>   Of the forest's ferny floor.

There, in those few lines, we get the keynote to the prevailing atmosphere ; " uncanny " is perhaps the best adjective to describe it ; though in truth it cannot be adequately described by any adjective or series of adjectives. It can only be felt ; and having felt it, we have experienced the emotion which is fundamental to all religions, from the earliest to the most modern times. The emotion, that is to say, is a universal one. To the simple savage of a past age it suggested goblins and evil spirits ; Mr. de la Mare puts a higher interpretation upon it ; but the appeal is to the same sense, and arouses the same feelings of awe. The very loneliness and silence seem full of a real but invisible life, and in every nook and cranny of the deserted house lurk unseen listeners.

> Only a host of phantom listeners
>   That dwelt in the lone house then
> Stood listening in the quiet of the moonlight
>   To that voice from the world of men :
>
> Stood thronging the faint moonbeams on the dark stair,
>   That goes down to the empty hall,
> Hearkening in an air stirred and shaken
>   By the lonely Traveller's call.

In my own opinion these are some of the best lines that Mr. de la Mare ever wrote. They give the gist of his outlook upon one of the greatest questions of metaphysics, though naturally, they are purely subjective. Equally effective are the last two lines, telling

> How the silence surged softly backwards,
> When the plunging hoofs were gone,

surely a most picturesque figure.

Another poem closely akin in mood to *The Listeners* is *The Revenant*, published in the volume *Motley*. In both, the poet's thoughts hover in that shadow land between life and death, where substance is an illusion and the psychic self the sole reality; where man's earthly experiences are sublimated into something higher, and the things of the world become etherealized under the magic spell of inner consciousness. Death, indeed, is very seldom far from our author's mind, as it was seldom far from Shakespeare's even in the most jocose of his comedies, and such poems as *Unregarded* and *Sorcery* are but a reiteration of the old Hebrew prophet's dictum that " in the midst of life we are in death."

Comes no more dawn to me,
  Nor bird of open skies.
Only his deep wood's gloom I see
  Till, at the end of all, shall rise,
Afar and tranquilly,
  Death's stretching sea.

This proximity of life and death is, for Mr. de la Mare, one of the great facts of existence; and it is a fact of momentous import, too. Of course, it is no new discovery of our poet's; to try to pretend that it was would be absurd. For ages moralists and cynics alike have been urging it upon us, and the poets (as well as the theological writers) of the eighteenth century worked it *ad nauseum*. But where Mr. de la Mare does differ from the majority of his eighteenth-century predecessors is in the significance that he attaches to the fact. They used it to belittle life and to emphasize its pettiness and triviality; for him it makes life more wonderful, and certainly more sublime. For the phenomenon which we call death, far from implying the extinction of personality, means its perfection. Truly, in the midst of life we are in death, but in a sense other than the narrow one implied by the scriptural writer; for death, to Mr. de la Mare, merely means the vastness of eternity, and the shades of eternity are ever around us. Unless one can appreciate this, it is impossible to understand fully many of our poet's verses.

I have already referred to *The Listeners*, *The Revenant*, and two other poems as illustrating this aspect of Walter de la Mare's art. Life and death are brought even into closer juxtaposition in *The Keys of Morning.* Louisa, a small schoolgirl, is sitting by an open window learning her lessons, when she imagines that, from the shadows on the opposite side of the way, the gaunt figure of Death is gazing at her. In his hand, lean, skinny and pale like that of one who has been afflicted with a long illness, he carries two keys, with the smaller of which he seems to beckon to her; and she, fascinated but terrified, leaves her work and goes out to him.

> Louisa laid her lesson book
>   On the cold window sill;
> And in the sleepy sunshine house
>   Went softly down, until
> She stood in the half-opened door,
>   And peeped. But strange to say,
> Where Death just now had sunning sat
>   Only a shadow lay:
> Just the tall chimney's round topp'd cowl,
>   And the small sun behind,
> Had, with its shadow in the dust,
>   Called sleepy death to mind.
> But most she thought how strange it was
>   Two keys that he should bear,
> And that, when beckoning, he should wag
>   The littlest in the air.

It is worth noticing that the adjective " sleepy " occurs twice in this short extract. The house is sleepy, death is described as sleepy, and probably, since it was a warm summer's day, when everything was still, we are to infer also that Louisa herself was sleepy. The word supplies the key to the poem; and not only to this poem, but to many others also. The supernatural illusion is produced through a sleepy, dreamy, trance-like atmosphere. Imagine that state between sleeping and waking which all of us know, when we are conscious of the movement of life around us and yet are unable to recognize anything very distinctly; when forms seem but shadows, and all sounds thin, strange and distant. We are then, one supposes, as near as we can ever get in actual life to that borderland between the two worlds of which I have just spoken ; and it is into such an atmosphere that Walter de la Mare carries us. Tennyson called sleep " death's twin brother." Mr. de la Mare frequently suggests the deathlike atmosphere by a description of someone sleeping. Anne, the little girl in *The Sleeper*, enters the house one sunny afternoon and is startled to find her mother asleep in a chair. The whole place is silent, and she creeps stealthily about the room as though afraid of disturbing the shadows or startling some ghost. Perfectly well does she know that it is only sleep ; and yet there is something so eerie about it.

> And as Anne peeped, a cloudlike dread
>   Stole over her, and then,
> On stealthy, mouselike feet she trod,
>   And tiptoed out again.

The poet's achievement here lies not so much in depicting the awe felt by that tiny girl amidst the atmosphere of utter stillness and quiet, but in making us feel it too. It is another instance of his discernment of the marvellous, the sublime, the supernatural in the commonplace.

From this recognition of the proximity of life and death it is almost inevitable that Mr. de la Mare's muse should live in a land of shadows. Not that the poet finds no delight in bright colours and in sunshine ; such a charge could never be brought against one who could write the *Songs of Childhood* and *Peacock Pie* ; but just as life's happiness would be less sweet without its sorrows, so the sunshine would be less attractive if it were not for the knowledge that sooner or later it will be blotted out by a shadow. To reverse a well-known formula, Mr. de la Mare is always conscious of the dark cloud behind the silver lining. Notice in how many of his poems the scene is laid in moonlight or in dusk ; and notice, too, how many which open in an atmosphere of brightness end with a suggestion of shadow. Perhaps it is not altogether by accident that the first piece in the volume of *Poems* published in 1906 was a set of stanzas entitled *Shadow*, in which the author wrote

The loveliest thing earth hath, a shadow hath,
A dark and livelong hint of death,
Haunting it ever, till its last, faint breath.
  Who, then, may tell
The beauty of heaven's shadowless asphodel?

These same stanzas also appear as the first poem in the two volumes of *Poems* 1901–1918, and as such symbolize the tone of the works which follow. Yes, Mr. de la Mare is enamoured of beauty, whether under the full blaze of the midday sun or the more subdued lustre of the moon; but his muse prefers the dusk and the half-lights, when the fairies appear in the meadows and the goblins haunt the woods.

There is something curiously wistful about the hour of twilight; that, probably, is why it holds such an attraction for our poet. It reflects his own mood, that mood of pensive melancholy by which so much of his verse is suffused. It appears particularly in the volume *The Listeners*, which marks the perfection of his art, though even in the earlier volumes it is never absent for long. *All That's Past* is a typical poem, meritorious artistically, restrained, tender and mellowed in tone. A study in the antiquity of Nature, it ends with a sad reflection upon the brevity of the individual life compared with the eternity of the rivers and woods.

Very old are we men;
  Our dreams are tales
Told in dim Eden
  By Eve's nightingales;
We wake and whisper awhile,
  But, the day gone by,
Silence and sleep like fields
  Of amaranth lie.

Notice again the stress on the dream element. Psychologists might find here matter for reflection; taking only three lines as a text they might preach a long and learned sermon on dreams as hereditary experience, and no doubt they could teach a mere student of literature a good deal. But most lovers of poetry will prefer Mr. de la Mare's method. He implies all that the psychologist could tell us, puts it much more briefly and beautifully, and, because his mind is not merely an analytical, scientific mind, suggests a great deal else besides. It is not so much what he says, as the way that he says it that appeals to one.

Anyone who reads these poems with a sympathetic mind, laying aside all preconceived notions and giving himself over to the magic of their subtle suggestiveness, cannot long escape that sense of continuity which underlies them. The poet sees the world as a pageant of change against an eternal background; and man himself is something the same, for besides his mortal part he has his real "person" which is immortal, without beginning or end, and has gathered to itself the almost forgotten experiences of innumerable ages. This, nothing in the material world can ever change; it is the great mystery in the heart of the individual, which makes him just what he is and differentiates him from other individuals.

Mr. de la Mare, we have said, has a passionate love of beauty in whatever form it is to be found; and that, perhaps, is at the bottom of his melancholy. He feels that beauty, like youth (his other object of devotion) is transitory, and its pleasures, therefore, fleeting. We catch a glimpse of it which fills us with a veritable joy, but ere we are aware of the change it is gone, never to return again. That, at least, one feels, explains the subdued sadness in such poems as *Here lies a Most Beautiful Lady*, *When the Rose is Faded*, and their like. For

> Beauty vanishes, beauty passes,
> However rare, rare it be;
> And when I crumble, who will remember
> That lady of the West Country?

It is something of that same regretfulness which Herrick expresses in his *Advice to Girls*; youth and beauty are shortlived, so enjoy them to the full while you are able. There is, of course, a beauty in old age, which many writers have not failed to see, but Mr. de la Mare very rarely dwells upon that. Even in those poems which, having little meaning in themselves, are full of subjective significance, the note usually struck is that sounded by Shakespeare in *Twelfth Night*; "youth's a stuff will not endure." The doctrine of Browning's *Rabbi Ben Ezra* is quite alien to

Walter de la Mare's muse. *Age* (in *Poems* 1906) is a lament for the passing of beauty, in which the poet ruminates sadly over the thought that

> This ugly old crone,
> Every beauty she had
> When a maid, when a maid,

while *Foreboding*, published in the same volume, again harps upon the same theme.

> Thou canst not see him standing by—
>   Time—with a poppied hand,
> Stealing thy youth's simplicity,
> Even as falls unceasingly
>   His waning sand.
>
> He will pluck thy childish roses, as
>   Summer from her bush
> Strips all the loveliness that was ;
> Even to the silence evening has
>   Thy laughter hush.

Mr. de la Mare shares this attachment to youthfulness and beauty with his contemporary, W. H. Davies. But there is this difference between the two poets, a difference which is fundamental ; that whereas Mr. Davies bids us look upon a beautiful object as if for the first time, Mr. de la Mare bids us look upon it as if for the last.[1]

Some of the poems, particularly in the volume *Peacock Pie*, are founded upon a childish story, told with all the *naïveté* and romance of a fairy tale ; but they can never be called narrative poems, for the simple reason that the narrative element is the least important aspect of them. *Off the Ground* is a delightful fantasy, though viewed as a story in verse it is nonsense; and Jim Jay which, as every one knows, starts with those whimsical lines,

> Do diddle di do,
> Poor Jim Jay
> Got stuck fast
> In Yesterday

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[1] Cf. the last poem in the volume *Motley*, entitled *Farewell* :

> Look thy last on all things lovely,
>   Every hour. Let no night
> Seal thy sense in deathly slumber
>   Till to delight
> Thou have paid thy utmost blessing.

is a veiled lament over the tragedy of the mind which is always lagging behind the times, refusing to adjust itself to new conditions. Incidentally also it may represent another aspect of the poet's sorrow for old age, for amongst those past the middle period of their life there has always been a large proportion of Jim Jays.

And now what of Mr. de la Mare as a nature-poet? Well, we have already touched upon that aspect of his art in discussing *The Listeners*; but a little more may be said of it here. Every volume of his poetry is full of detailed painting of earthly beauty mingled with spiritual beauty; and as one would expect, in most cases it is upon the spiritual side of nature that the stress is laid. It is in a mental attitude of tenderness, kindness and understanding that he approaches his scenes, his landscapes are always spiritualized, and the unseen world is constantly present in the midst of them, giving them an atmosphere and a personality all their own. Let us go to that poem *The Little Green Orchard* in *Peacock Pie*, and at once we are confronted with this mystical element in nature, the sense of an invisible presence amidst the flowers and trees, which induces in the poet a firm conviction that even in the quietest moments

> " Some one is always sitting there,
> In the little green orchard."

The Mountains likewise deals with this mystery behind the natural scene, though from a rather different point of view, while *Thule*, *Flotsam* and *Sea Magic* tell of the strange enchantment of the sea—which, by the way, is not a favourite subject with our poet. Mr. de la Mare's wonderful command of language always stands him in good stead in his nature poems. *Silver*, with its cool, liquid rhythm, is a beautiful colour study of the countryside as seen under the light of the moon, and a slight sprinkling of antiquated language (shoon, for instance, as the plural of shoe) adds to the charm. The title is certainly appropriate; it indicates exactly the predominant atmosphere. About the whole piece there is again that insubstantial, fairy quality which appears so frequently in its author's verses. Here it is created purely by the melodious and well-chosen language, but in other pieces external aids will be found. No one can have failed to notice, for instance, the poet's fondness for ruins, lonely castles, and anything with a suggestion of antiquity about it. They appeal to the romantic in his nature, and they enhance the magical in his works, producing that atmosphere of expectancy which is inseparable from his poems of the supernatural. One constantly feels that something is about to happen ; but it never does.

Nor is Walter de la Mare without a sense of humour ; if he were it is doubtful whether he could have produced poetry, even of the serious kind, which penetrates so far to the depths of truth and reality as does his. For no poetry can ring true unless it is founded upon and inspired by a full view of life, and the sense of humour is a very real constituent of our essential being. Mr. de la Mare is never so pre-occupied with serious issues that he cannot turn aside now and then to indulge in a little delightful nonsense ; indeed, speaking metaphorically, one feels that he penned a good deal of his verses with a twinkle in his eye. Sometimes, too, he adopts a semi-jocose tone to express disgust, as is the case in *Tit for Tat.* A sportsman is just returning from his day's pleasure, with his gun on his shoulder, feeling very proud of his catch, when the poet breaks out with the words,

Wonder I very much do, Tom Noddy,
  If ever, when you are a-roam,
An ogre from space will stoop a lean face
  And lug you home :

Lug you home over his fence, Tom Noddy,
  Of thorn-stocks nine yards high,
With your bent knees strung round his old iron gun
  And your head dan-dangling by :

And hang you up stiff on a hook, Tom Noddy,
  From a stone-cold pantry shelf,
Whence your eyes will glare in an empty stare,
  Till you are cooked yourself !

These few stanzas would make a far more effective piece of propaganda for the Society for the Suppression of Cruel Sports than all its pamphlets and platform speeches. And it is the same with the lines on the butcher's shop. I do not know whether Mr. de la Mare is a vegetarian, but in this particular poem he expresses most forcibly a feeling of revolt at the cold-blooded killing and eating of animals.

I can't abear a butcher,
  I can't abide his meat,
The ugliest shop of all is his,
  The ugliest in the street ;
Bakers' are warm, cobblers' dark,
  Chemists' burn watery lights ;
But oh, the sawdust butcher's shop,
  The ugliest of sights !

It is only a slight and seemingly half-serious piece, but there is a wealth of meaning in it which would never have become so apparent but for the semi-comic tone. Mr. de la Mare is a master of moods, metre and language. How nicely has he charactered the baker's, the cobbler's and the chemist's shops. " Bakers' are warm " ; I wonder how many writers would have thought of using just that one simple adjective. Yet when we come to think about it, it does express exactly what strikes one about a baker's shop. " Cobblers' are dark " ; again he has seized upon the essential characteristic. " Chemists' burn watery lights " ; could it have been expressed better or more succinctly ? The poet knows the precise value of the words he is using ; literally he has a feeling for correct diction, and having once grasped the essential trait in the character of a person, a place or an object, he can epitomize it in a few syllables. Hope or pathos, joy or sorrow, too, he can express without any apparent effort, while grace, charm, and a supreme musical quality permeate all his work. Perhaps Mr. Coulson Kernahan was saying much more than he was aware when, a few years ago, he compared the music of Mr. de la Mare to the song of a nightingale.[1] The simile is not inappropriate, for both alternate between joy and sadness, and in both there is a sweet and exquisite melody

[1] *Five More Famous Living Poets* (1928).

suggestive of an insubstantial fancy unknown to this world of hard materialism. Our poet's range of rhythms and metres is wide. This, naturally, is inevitable with a writer so scrupulous as Mr. de la Mare, for he is always very particular to fit his technique to his subject. Frequently his metres make a liquid tone; and oftentimes he employs words, without any real meaning in them, purely for their musical effect. *All That's Past*, with its balance between sound and thought, its subdued tone and its fine imaginativeness, is a perfect example of the blending of all the elements necessary to poetry. Then there are those lines, *Here lies a most beautiful lady* to which I have already referred—lines which could have been written by no other poet. Mr. de la Mare's music is pre-eminently individual; we can never be quite sure in what direction his phrases are going to turn. His lines seem to feel their way along, and then, just as we have made up our mind what is coming next, we are surprised by something quite different. Therein lies half their charm.

The Listeners has been described as one of the most perfect specimens of prosody in the English language. Well, it is rather dangerous to make such a sweeping claim, admire the poem as we may. A more guarded statement would have been much safer. Yet we cannot deny that the effectiveness of the piece depends to a large extent upon the metre. The general principle seems to be that each line contains three emphatic stresses, irrespective of the number of syllables, the arrangement of the weak and medium stresses being quite arbitrary.[1] The conventional feet of English poetry, thus, are often unrecognizable. The first four lines may be set out below as an illustration, the symbol ′ being employed to indicate a syllable with a strong stress.

"Is there ánybody thére," said the Tráveller,
  Knócking on the móonlit dóor;
And his hórse in the silence chámped the grásses
  Of the fórest's férny flóor.

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[1] One naturally compares it with Coleridge's *Christabel*, which, the author states, was composed on the same principle, save that there were four stresses per line instead of three.

Some readers may object to the omission of a stress from the first syllable of " silence " ; but a careful aural analysis of the value given it in reading the line aloud will, I think, show that it only carries a secondary emphasis.[1] The one line in which there does seem to be any irregularity is the seventeenth, which it is difficult to scan without employing four stresses, arranged as follows :

> Stood thrónging the faint móonbeams on the dárk stáir.

This system of prosody produces a peculiar rising and falling rhythm, slow, measured, but deliberate, which, running through the whole poem, gives an impression of the ceaseless champing of the horse in the background. So the atmosphere of *The Listeners* depends mainly upon two things ; the associations called up by the actual words, and the background of subdued sounds suggested by rhythm, metre, alliteration and similar devices.

Very little of Mr. de la Mare's poetry is didactic. Not that he holds no decided views about life; on the contrary, a reading of his verses as a whole will leave little doubt as to his beliefs. But he never formulates his doctrines in the same way that Wordsworth, or even Coleridge did ; and this for a very good reason. He approaches all questions from the point of view of *feeling*, not intellect ; therefore he eschews questioning about life and conduct, for the questioning attitude is pre-eminently an intellectual one, depending upon the exercise of the rational faculty, and Mr. de la Mare's muse could never live for long in a world of pure rationalism. Nor would it be correct to call him a poet of emotion, for the vast bulk of his work is singularly unemotional in the generally accepted sense of that term. There are, for instance, no passionate poems of love or hatred in any of his several volumes. Even his worship of beauty is not an emotional one. Shelley's was, Keats' was, and so, to some extent, was Rupert Brooke's ; but where will you find anything comparable to their poems in

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[1] Though Mrs. Enid Hamer (*The Metres of English Poetry*, 1931) would give " silence " a strong stress, and " champed " a secondary one. It is just possible to read it in this way, but I feel that most people would give the latter of these words the greater value in a normal reading of the line.

Walter de la Mare? The author of the *Songs of Childhood* had as real an appreciation of the rainbow as did the lake poet; yet can we imagine his exclaiming with him, in a transport of ecstatic joy,

> My heart leaps up, when I behold
>   A rainbow in the sky.

No; this is Mr. de la Mare's poem on the rainbow.

> I saw the lovely arch
>   Of rainbow span the sky,
> The gold sun burning
>   As the rain swept by.
>
> In bright ring'd solitude
>   The showery foliage shone
> One lovely moment,
>   And the bow was gone.

It is neither from the heart nor the intellect that the inspiration for such lines as these springs. It is from the soul, the secret self, the very essence of being. If we want to classify Mr. de la Mare, clumsy as the phrase is, we can only call him a psychic poet. Imagination he certainly has—no modern poet, probably, has it to a greater degree—yet he never boasts of the pleasures of imagination as the early romantics did; and even his poetry of life is psychological rather than photographic. He is concerned, that is to say, not so much with experience as such, but with the psychic reaction to it, so that for him the whole of earthly existence is the story of the responses of the psychic self to whatever man encounters on his journey through the world. Such a belief is bound at times to lead to cynicism. It does with Mr. de la Mare. In *The Miracle* he feels that man takes too limited a view of life, pursuing one ambition and deliberately excluding from himself all the pleasures and the finer influence which may come from other, though perhaps humbler, sources. The waves of the sea gather in volume and in force as they advance, only to disappear in foam as soon as they reach the shore. Even so are the efforts of man. They are hurled at one great object, but they spend themselves and then are no more.

As for the studies of humanity which we get in these poems, they are descriptive rather than dramatic. There is no dialogue, no story, and no action, but from them emerges another aspect of Mr. de la Mare's genius ; namely his ability to present clear-cut, individual personality in a very few lines. *Multum in parvo* might well be the motto at the head of his characters from Shakespeare, for that economy of language and precision of diction which we have noticed already, shows to full advantage here. Falstaff, Imogen, Iago, Macbeth, whoever they are, he has succeeded in seizing upon the fundamentals of their character and setting them before us in a vivacious, life-like manner. " A dark, lean face, a narrow, slanting eye " ; that is the opening line of the portrait of Iago. And does it not suggest exactly what we have all felt about him, but could never have expressed so ably ?

But excellent as these character sketches are, Mr. de la Mare will always be remembered primarily for his more spiritualized, less tangible poetry, the poetry of the dream-world. I use the word " dream-world " advisedly, for, as I have pointed out at an earlier stage of this study, about all those poems such as *All That's Past*, with their sense of eternity and the unknown, there is an atmosphere of somnolence. Indeed, our poet is convinced that for many of us sleep is the only way of escape from hard materialism to that enchanted world which lies all invisible around us.[1]

And now, as my last quotation from Mr. de la Mare I will give *The Song of Finis*, the concluding poem of the volume *Peacock Pie*, in which the author projects his imagination to the extreme edge of the thinkable, where he pictures to himself a state of " nothingness " beyond the bounds of space and time. It is a wonderful piece of writing. I doubt whether anybody else, save perhaps Blake and W. B. Yeats, could have accomplished it.

At the edge of all the Ages
  A Knight sate on his steed,
His armour red and thin with rust,
  His soul from sorrow freed ;

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[1] Cf. the poem *Sleep*, printed in *The Listeners and Other Poems*

And he lifted up his vizor
   From a face of skin and bone,
And his horse turn'd head and whinnied
   As the twain stood there alone.

No bird above that steep of time
   Sang of a livelong quest;
No wind breathed,
      Rest:
" Lone for an end ! " cried Knight to steed,
   Loosed an eager rein—
Charged with his challenge into Space,
   And quiet did quiet remain.

In this poem is symbolized practically every important aspect of the author's genius—that other-worldliness to which reference has so often been made, the sense of eternity, supernaturalism, loneliness, melancholy, mystery, expectancy, yes, and word artistry, too, as well as melody and rhythmic music.

I have suggested a possible analogy between Mr. de la Mare and W. B. Yeats. I will carry it no further now; it is a question for the critic and the lover of poetry to think over. But this difference should be pointed out; that whereas Yeats nearly always expresses longing, Walter de la Mare expresses content. As we have noticed already, Blake, in his earlier years—the Blake of the *Poetical Sketches* and the *Songs of Innocence*—is akin in some respects to the author of the *Songs of Childhood*; and then Coleridge and Sir James Barrie come to mind, too, while in *Never to Be*, *The Dark Château* and *Time Passes* one detects a touch of Edgar Allan Poe. But really, although Mr. de la Mare has something in common with all of these, he is like none of them. He is an individual poet, with an art that is all his own. About much of his verse there is the naïveté and simplicity of the old ballads; and yet it is far from being an artless simplicity; rather it is delicate and refined, instinct with imagination, the result of a cultured taste, a sensitive mind, and a wonderful feeling for the value of language. He is one of the few modern poets whose work has shown no signs of decline with the passing of the years, and whose verses have received an ever-increasing meed of appreciation. I speak without reference to statistics, but I should imagine that for many years past he has commanded a wider public than most of his contemporaries, and that to-day his reputation stands as high as ever it has. Nor is this altogether unaccountable, for his growing fame seems to have been coincident with the disillusion in Victorian ideals. The nineteenth century, obsessed as it was with its dream of power, its pride in its scientific achievements, and its visions of the progress of man, upward and onward for ever, was at heart a materialist age. Walter de la Mare stands for everything that is anti-materialist. Call him a spiritualist in poetry, call him a mystic, call him what you will, his significance remains the same. He is the representative figure of an age which is rapidly turning away from the purely mundane, materialized, circumscribed view of life and under the influence of a new sense of infinitude and eternity, is attaching a fresh meaning to spiritual values. The poet of the sub-conscious mind and half-realized desires, he succeeds in transcending the limits of the physical world and carrying us with him into the realm of the immaterial, where soul and thought are the only realities.

FREDERICK T. WOOD.

[Previous articles in this authoritative and valuable study of contemporary poets and their work by Dr. F. T. Wood, editor of Macmillan's *Augustan Poetry*, 1700–1751, etc., have dealt with Mr. E. Blunden, Mr. Laurence Binyon, Sir Wm. Watson, and Mr. John Drinkwater.]

POETRY

AND if one holds a metal
Strange fashioned from such as a rose's petal
Hard mined and sought,

Then let a ring be wrought
And forged in beauty
For the world to see.

MAURICE CARPENTER.

THE GEORGE HERBERT TERCENTENARY

ON March 3rd exactly three hundred years ago, George Herbert, the beloved rector of Bemerton in Wiltshire, was buried under the high altar of his church at the age of forty. Shortly before his death, *The Temple*, a collection of his devotional verse, and *The Church Militant* were first published.

George Herbert was the fifth son of Richard Herbert of Montgomery Castle and his wife Magdalen, a daughter of Sir Richard Newport of Shropshire. Left fatherless, at the age of four, he began his education under private tutors and when twelve was sent to Westminster School. Three years later he was elected to a scholarship at Trinity, Cambridge, where he matriculated in 1609. In 1612 he took his B.A. degree, in 1614 he became a minor fellow, in 1616 a major fellow and proceeded Master of Arts the following year. He soon made a name by his writing of both English and Latin verse. In 1612 he had been made Public Orator to the University and had come under the notice of the King. He was introduced to His Majesty by the Earl of Pembroke, at the King's special request, and thereafter spent much of his time at court. It was then, we are told, that he gave way to a life of show and pleasure. It is true that he was appointed to the living of Whitford, but three hundred years ago such livings were bestowed upon laymen by the King as a mark of his favour, and no onerous duties were attached to the gift.

It was not until the King's death that George Herbert gave up court life and devoted himself to religious work. In 1626 he was appointed to the living of Leighton Bromswold, where he rebuilt the church, but it is thought that he did not actually take orders until 1630, when he was appointed to his last living at Bemerton. It was about a year before this that he had married Jane Danvers, the eldest daughter of an old friend, whom he had met whilst staying with a relative in Wiltshire.

The exact date of his poems is not known, but it is thought that the majority were written during the latter part of his life. They stand out among the best English devotional verse and many are marked by sincerity and depth of feeling.

The *Church Militant* is a long poem telling the story of the spread of the Christian religion from East to West and of its changes in character. It is written in rhyming couplets with the following recurrent lines :

> How deare to me, O God, Thy counsels are !
> Who may with Thee compare.

It has no great poetic qualities but it contains a line which lingers with one when the rest is forgotten : " Strength levels grounds, Art makes a garden there."

He wrote some Latin verse and a few secular poems, also a rhyming version of the first seven Psalms of David, but these lack the poetic qualities of the original.

The poems by which he is best remembered are the shorter ones published under the title of *The Temple*. When reading these we can picture him in his Bemerton rectory, beloved by his parishioners, writing the simple verses that they can understand, giving them something to help them in their daily life.

> All may of Thee partake :
> Nothing can be so mean
> Which with his tincture, " for Thy sake,"
> Will not grow bright and clean.
>
> A servant with this clause
> Makes drudgery divine ;
> Who sweeps a room as for Thy laws
> Makes that and th' action fine.

The above verses are from *The Elixir* ; then there is the little poem *Love*, perfect in its way, and *Unkindnesse*, from which I quote two verses :

> Lord, make me coy and tender to offend :
> In friendship, first I think if that agree
> Which I intend
> Unto my friend's intent and end ;
> I would not use a friend as I use Thee.

. . . . .

Yet can a friend what Thou hast done fulfill?
O, write in brass, " My God upon a tree
His bloud did spill,
Onely to purchase my good-will : "
Yet use I not my foes as I use Thee.

But perhaps the favourite, still read by many lovers of poetry, is *The Pulley* ; to quote from it would be to spoil it, so I give it in full :

When God at first made man,
Having a glasse of blessings standing by,
" Let us," said He, " poure on him all we can ;
Let the world's riches, which dispersed lie,
Contract into a span."

So strength first made a way,
Then beautie flowed, then wisdome, honour, pleasure ;
When almost all was out, God made a stay,
Perceiving that, alone of all His treasure,
Rest in the bottome lay.

" For if I should," said He,
" Bestow this jewell also on My creature,
He would adore My gifts instead of Me,
And rest in Nature, not the God of Nature :
So both should losers be.

" Yet let him keep the rest,
But keep them with repining restlessnesse ;
Let him be rich and wearie, that at least,
If goodnesse leade him not, yet wearinesse
May tosse him to My breast."

We are told that George Herbert's motto was " Lesse than the least of God's mercies," and we feel sure that he would still have applied this to his work even had he known that it would be remembered three hundred years after his death.

HILDA M. SLADE.

The poetry of Spenser represents the meeting between the traditions of the Middle Ages and those of the Renaissance ; and yet Spenser remains for the general reader an admired but neglected poet. Mr. B. E. C. Davis has written a critical study of him which will be published shortly by the Cambridge University Press.

THE POETRY OF GEORGE HERBERT

FASHION in poets is always changing, not capriciously or frivolously, but because of some inner compulsion that temporarily allies the sympathies of one age with the poetry and drama of another. Such a natural occurrence as, for instance, the popularity of *Henry V*, above all other of Shakespeare's plays, during the Great War, is only an obvious example of something which is going on the whole time, perhaps less perceptibly. Each age rediscovers for itself its heritage of poetry, and each age revalues anew the treasure it finds. A marked revival of interest in many seventeenth-century poets is a characteristic of present-day times, but George Herbert, the tercentenary of whose death falls this spring, is not prominently of this number. Herbert is one of those poets who retains, and will probably always retain, a small but faithful reading public. The twentieth century may be said to have rediscovered John Donne and Andrew Marvell, the founder and almost the last exponent of the so-called " metaphysical " style, but to have left Herbert, who owes much to Donne and gave not a little to Marvell, very much where he was. Nor is this due to a mere whim of fashion. Whereas Donne's poetry is more in tune with the poetry of to-day than with that of the last century, the opposite is true of Herbert, who has all the qualities which were fashionable a decade ago, and are now undergoing their spell of unpopularity. Born in 1593, Herbert lived a fairly uneventful life, at first as a courtier with the post of Public Orator to Cambridge University, and later in orders at Bemerton. His poetry is throughout moral, middle-class and respectable, exalting discipline and duty ; his standards are the recognized standards of Christianity, and, except for an occasional moment of hesitancy or rebellion, he is undisturbedly clear as to his ultimate object—a perfect understanding of God's justice and wisdom. All this is very much out of temper with the twentieth century, and it is not perhaps surprising that modern readers prefer Donne's self-searching, self-mocking restlessness, his flashes of unearthly ecstasy and moments of lightning revelation. Herbert, however, by no means deserves a polite obscurity. His poetry (the greater part of which probably dates from the latter part of his life) is usually effective, often good, and, although like the work of all his contemporaries, it is sometimes bad, it is never so obviously unsuccessful as the worst of Crashaw or Vaughan.

The " metaphysical " style (a useful name although an inexact one, and of later origin than the verse to which it applies) was capable of the most violent of contrasts between the sublime and the ridiculous. It is not an easy style to define. Perhaps the root difference between the " metaphysical " development and the straight-forward, full-blooded Elizabethan manner is related to the gradual but distinct change in the whole temper and spirit of the country that was beginning to be felt in the early Jacobean days, and that was to become most marked before the end of the century. Something of the spirit of exultant patriotism, of national consciousness of greatness that was characteristic of the heroic swaggering days of Elizabeth, had passed away with her, giving place to an interest in the individual rather than in the nation, at the same time (although this does not apply to Herbert) accompanied by a growing spirit of restlessness, an intellectual assault on the meanings of right and wrong, a gradual letting-go of old loyalties and beliefs. This change, which is just a little comparable to the trend of modern-day thought since the war, whether it be regarded as the beginning of a moral degeneration or the birth of a new sincerity, according to the critic's own persuasions, is most clearly marked in the literature of the time. Nothing is more significant of this change than the fashion for the " metaphysical " manner—above all things the poetry of the self-conscious. The language of Marlowe, Kidd, Green, Peel, the early Shakespeare and all the glorious galaxy of the Elizabethans, is colourful, grandiloquent, racy, bombastic, imaginative, tremendous ; but if it has all the splendour of the morning it has little of the subtlety of the half-lights. For the hinted effect, the muted tone, the chance suggestion that suddenly opens up a vista of undreamed-of possibilities, for all the bewitchments of the twilight, search must be made here and there through the pages of Donne and his followers, the metaphysicians, who are always analysing what they feel, one might almost say complicating it, investigating the processes of their own intellect, choosing to clothe their thoughts in images drawn from anywhere but the obvious, rising in rare moments to sublime heights, or, lacking inspiration, sinking, not into bombast, but into obscurity.

Donne, who set the fashion, both raised the style which he popularized to heights of almost unmatchable eloquence and allowed it to degenerate into a series of over-ingenious juggling tricks. The violent see-sawing of his verse can be illustrated by a single poem, which begins quietly, soars suddenly to such lines as

> 'Twere prophanation of our joys,
> To tell the layetie our love,

sustains the ecstasy throughout two verses, ending on

> But we by a love, so much refined
> That our selves know not what it is
> Inter-assuréd of the mind
> Care lesse eyes, lips and hands to misse,

and then suddenly collapses and deviates into an elaborate comparison of these unearthly lovers with the two feet of a pair of compasses. Vaughan, the mystical nature-poet, only in flashes succeeded in escaping from an entangling net of more or less clumsy " conceits." Crashaw, whipping himself up into his religious ecstasies, produced marvels of execrable verse in the true metaphysical manner. But Herbert, with less subtlety than Donne, less mysticism than Vaughan, and less fervour and more restraint than Crashaw, was of all the group perhaps the most consistently successful. Like many good poets from Chaucer onwards, he took the fashions of his time and adapted them to his own individuality. If his poetry is lacking in the sublimity of the other metaphysicals, it is also lacking in the sudden crashes therefrom into the absurd. Occasional bathos is the worst that can befall a poet who resolutely eschews the riskier heights of imaginative poetry, where failure is by contrast more spectacular.

Isaac Walton relates that Herbert, when conscious of the approach of death, gave the MS. of his poems to a friend with the words,

> "Sir, I pray deliver this little book to my dear brother Farrer, and tell him he shall find in it a picture of the many spiritual conflicts that have passed betwixt God and my soul, before I could subject mine to the will of Jesus my master; in whose service I have now found perfect freedom."

As a matter of fact, however, Herbert's poems bear little trace of spiritual conflict. Herbert would probably have agreed with his first biographer that the best way to "beget content and increase confidence in the power, and wisdom, and providence of Almighty God" was simply to "study to be quiet"; and although it seems probable that at the time of taking orders it was something of a struggle to him to give up the pleasures of the fashionable court life he had hitherto enjoyed, like Walton, Herbert found his religion an anchor in a changing world. So it is that a certainty of God's mercy informs his poetry with an assured tranquillity.

Sweet day, so cool, so calm, so bright,
The bridall of the earth and skie,
The dew shall weep thy fall to-night;
For thou must die.

Sweet rose, whose hue angrie and brave
Bids the rash gazer wipe his eye,
Thy root is ever in its grave,
And thou must die.

Sweet spring, full of sweet days and roses,
A box where sweets compacted lie,
My musick shows ye have your closes,
And all must die.

This is typical of Herbert at his best. The thought is obvious enough, but the expression is so admirably suited to the sense, the meaning of the words and the dying cadences of the verse so intimately connected, that the poem gives an impression of perfection in little. Unfortunately this is not quite the final impression, for the last verse affords an unlucky example of one of those failures in sustaining the image that are characteristic of Herbert and his fellows :

Onely a sweet and vertuous soul,
Like season'd timber, never gives ;
But though the whole world turn to coal,
Then chiefly lives.

Even with the explanation that "coal" here means "charcoal" this conclusion is a sad drop. A similar disaster mars the final verse of the beautiful *Pilgrimage*, which mounts steadily to a conclusion that is laughable in its inadequacy :

My hill was further ; so I flung away,
Yet heard a crie,
Just as I went, "None goes that way
And lives." "If that be all," said I,
"After so foul a journey death is fair,
And but a chair."

Modern critics are fond of asserting that a poet's best-known poems are not in fact his best. Herbert is one of the many poets of whom this is not true. He is remembered, and rightly, for just those poems which breathe this spirit of unhurried quietness. Herbert, the poet of assurance in the ultimate triumph of man's soul, is consequently the poet of comfort.

Love built a stately house, where Fortune came ;
And spinning phansies, she was heard to say
That her fine cobwebs did support the frame,
Whereas they were supported by the same ;
But Wisdome quickly swept them all away.

The next two verses describe the attacks of Pleasure and Sin on the house, and the concluding verse is characteristic of Herbert's philosophy :

Then Sinne combin'd with Death in a firm band
To rase the building to the very floore :
Which they effected, none could them withstand :
But Love took Grace and Glorie by the hand,
And built a braver palace than before.

There is the fragrance and the softness of a balm about other of his poems :

I gave to Hope a watch of mine ; but he
  An anchor gave to me.
Then an old Prayer-book I did present ;
  And he an optick sent.
With that I gave a vial full of tears ;
  But he, a few green eares.
Ah, loyterer ! I'le no more, no more I'le bring :
  I did expect a ring.

These quotations show Herbert successfully turning the fashion of the day for " conceits " to his own account. The conception of the world as a house built for man, the concrete imagery of the poem called *Hope*, these are at once in tune with the taste of the time and with Herbert's own mentality. The poet's " wit," as the seventeenth-century critics called it, plays delicately about the subject of the poem, but there is no straining of the analogies. This is not always the case. Sometimes Herbert is lured into excesses of ingenuity :

Oh that I were an orange-tree,
  That busie plant !
Then should I ever laden be,
                And never want
Some fruit for him that dressèd me !

This is a little too quaint for the average reader's taste, the same sort of straining for effect which led Richard Crashaw to such absurdities as his picture of the angels in heaven bringing their bottles to Mary Magdalen's eyes to draw from her tears their Master's wine. Sometimes Herbert expends a misplaced ingenuity on the actual form of his verse. The *Altar* consists of lines delicately tapering to the appropriate shape, his *Easter Wings* flap across the page for the visual edification of his readers. Herbert's lapses, however, are comparatively rare. The majority of his poems are effective, both in expression and in their strongly individual form. His verse has a quality, peculiar to himself, that can only be called " dramatic," a mounting to a climax, an ending with an effective twist, and this constantly rescues him from the dull or the merely pretty-pretty. This feeling for the dramatic, the effective, the stimulating touch, which causes the reader to speculate what Herbert might not have done in another medium, often leads him to cast his poems in dialogue form. The following example, although it is not a particularly beautiful sample of Herbert's work, is a handy illustration of this point:

As on a window late I cast mine eye,
I saw a vine drop grapes with J and C
Anneal'd on every bunch. One standing by
Ask'd what it meant. I (who am never loth
To spend my judgement) said: "It seem'd to me
To be the bodie and the letters both
Of Joy and Charitie." "Sir, you have not miss'd,"
  The man reply'd; "it figures Jesus Christ."

The same technique is apparent, more elaborately worked out, in the dialogue with Time, or in the poem of revolt against servitude called *The Collar*, with its effective conclusion:

But as I rav'd and grew more fierce and wilde
  At every word,
Methought I heard one calling, "Childe";
  And I reply'd, "My Lord,"—

or in the dialogue between man and his Saviour, or in the beautiful *Pulley* which begins, "When God at first made man," and is (deservedly) one of the best known of Herbert's poems. Besides a fondness for this "repartee" effect at the conclusion Herbert likes to begin his poems with a gesture of violence: "I struck the board, and cry'd, 'No more!'" or, to his conscience, impatiently, "Peace, pratler, do not loure!"

Here is a feeling for effect which Herbert never allows to degenerate into a mere trick, and which is, moreover, entirely his own. One might almost say that his poems are "snappy." They give a satisfying effect of hitting the nail on the head, partly due to these dramatic touches, partly to his capacity for choosing exactly the fitting word. This poet, sometime Public Orator to Cambridge University, and author moreover of a quantity of Latin verse, imparts to his verses something of the polished suavity of Horace, while yet retaining all the freshness of an April morning :

Sweet Peace, where dost thou dwell, I humbly crave ?
  Let me once know.
I sought thee in a secret cave,
  And ask'd if Peace were there.
A hollow winde did seem to answer, " No ;
  Go seek elsewhere."

or,

I got me flowers to straw Thy way,
I got me boughs off many a tree ;
But Thou wast up by break of day,
And brought'st Thy sweets along with Thee.

The merit of this lies in the extreme lucidity and simplicity of the effect, the apparent absence of any effort on the poet's part. Meaning and expression are here perfectly fused into one, and become indivisible and inter-dependent, and the result is so simple and yet so magical that it eludes analysis. Ben Jonson's lyrics have the same exquisite lucidity, and it is significant that Ben Jonson stoutly maintained that study of the classics was the indispensable groundwork to the writing of good English poetry.

A study of Herbert's best poetry thus really leads to a rather odd conclusion, and that is that Herbert, whom critical surveys invariably place among the metaphysicians, is really out of place in this group. It is true that the bulk of his poetry shows all the fashionable tricks of the time ; yet, though he is often with the metaphysicals in manner, he is rarely with them in spirit, and it is when he discards all artificiality and writes with perfect directness and sweetness that he is at his happiest. Herbert, the poet of comfort, the lover of the Church rather than the direct lover of God, had not sufficient profundity or originality of thought to be really successful when he is taking as his model a man of infinitely more subtle and complex and contradictory character—John Donne. Herbert is, unfortunately, not always " great when some great occasion is presented to him." On the contrary, he is apt to be merely prosaic. To take one example among many ; the conception of man as somehow allied to every part of the created world, as related to all that has ever been or will ever be, as a single note in the great swelling harmony of the Universe, is one that has kindled the imagination of poets through many centuries. One of Herbert's contemporaries, Vaughan, in a moment of vision, catches a glimpse of this mystic unity :

I saw Eternity the other night,
Like a great ring of pure and endless light,
    All calm as it was bright ;
And round beneath it, Time in hours, days, years,
    Driven by the spheres
Like a vast shadow moved ; in which the world
    And all her train were hurled.
The doting lover in his quaintest strain
    Did there complain ;
Near him, his lute, his fancy, and his flights,
    Wit's sour delights ;
With gloves, and knots, the silly snares of pleasure,
    Yet his dear treasure,
All scattered lay, while he his eyes did pour
    Upon a flower.

But Herbert, wrestling with something of the same idea, finds that the glory has completely eluded him :

    Man is all symmetrie,
Full of proportions, one limbe to another,
  And all to all the world besides ;
  Each part may call the farthest brother,
For head with foot has private amitie,
    And both with moons and tides.

It is fashionable nowadays to believe, or to pretend to believe, that it is better to have failed in attempting a big thing than to have succeeded in a little. From a poetical point of view this has never been, is not, and will never be true. A poet who gets out of his depth fails, and the failure is not glorious but either ludicrous or merely prosaic. This is particularly true of Herbert, who is at his worst when he is at his most ambitious. Repose, common-sense, sanity, a delicate if not profound perception, an instinct both for the fitting and for the dramatic—these are not characteristics which make for great poetry perhaps, but they are associated in the minds of Herbert's readers with comfort and with wisdom.

> In small proportions we just beauty see,
> And in short measures life may perfect be.

These lines of Ben Jonson's are appropriate to Herbert, particularly as they express a sentiment, almost a philosophy, of which doubtless he would have heartily approved.

U. M. D. ORANGE.

ACTUALITY

SO this is life!
How frail!
How scarred with strife!
How quickly blown!

So this is life!

I knew—have always known—
That somewhen I should whisper
" This is life .
Now hastening past,"
Proving how strangely the dark fairy-tale
True—true at last.

K. V. CHEVIS.

THE CREMATION

AS if in love, man's mould gives to the fire,
A strange delight.
An iridescent flame leaps up, a pyre
Of passion bright.

This is not he, you are but mocked, poor flame,
He is the Sun.
The star, the rose, the beauty, without name,
All that was done,

For good in life, its honour, unstained, clean,
That now is he.
And more, a disembodied thought's demesne,
Of ecstasy.

ALICE E. COLLINGE.

MAD GIRL'S SONG

THE Rain ! the Rain !
O—listen to the Rain !
Tip-tap, tip-tapping on my window-pane,
In the dead, secret middle of the night,
He comes for my delight,
When I am all alone,
Descending from his throne,
From such a dizzy height,
Falling, falling, falling !

Being in love with Rain,
Though drowsy, I, or napping,
I always hear him rapping,
And throw the casement wide,
To let him slip inside
When he tap-taps again
To say he's calling.

I am not afraid
To be alone with Rain.
I need no barricade
Him to restrain.
He sings a serenade
With soft refrain.
His touch is light and cool
And O so clean !
He comes full-dressed
In his very best,
So neat and new,
Vesture more beautiful
Was never seen
And when the light comes through
Making it shine
Silver and crystalline,
With a gay frou-frou
He fills the scene,
Beating a loud tattoo
Through all our pleasant interview.

Then on a thousand feet
Merrily down the street
He dancing goes,
Till the dull asphalt glows
Under his twinkling toes
And another town
All upside down
Suddenly shows.

He washes roofs, and spires and trees,
Playing tag with every breeze,
Splashing, dashing,
Rushing, gushing,
Melting, pelting,
Swishing, flushing,
Pattering, scattering,
Slipping, tripping,
Leaping, sweeping,
Dripping, dropping,
Never stopping
For a mopping—
All his mind on mischief set,
That the whole world be wet, wet, wet.

What cares he, marauder bold,
Whether you be warm or cold,
What for ruined frills and laces,
Pouts and frowns on lovely faces,
Reckless of the garden's order,
Broken bed and beaten border,
Roads all muddied,
Cellars flooded,
Everything in his mad round
Through the town and country-side,
Drenched and drowned.

At last, victorious, satisfied,
His shining lances all called back
Behind the dark cloud-wrack—

Of a sudden, sunlight breaks
Through the mist
To radiance kissed
And a glad world wakes
To summer joy and heat again.

But I who love the Rain
And his wild ways,
My heart aches and aches,
Counting the days
Until he comes again,
Lovely Rain!

LILY E. F. BARRY.

HOW LONG THE SUNLIGHT

(*A terza rima sonnet on the possible incomplete evolution of the human perceptive faculties.*)

HOW long the sunlight must have shone on earth
Before dull matter's womb waked to receive
The germ essential to the first plant's birth!

And how long did the light take to achieve
Her patient bringing forth of life with breath
And motion!—then, impatient to relieve

Her loved creations of a dark like death,
Provoke the sensitive eyes that could respond
To her beneficent caress! . . . Have faith,

O light-born humans, great things lie beyond
Our present vision and our senses' scope:
Might not light yet remove bond after bond,

Give new perceptions where in dark we grope,
And earthly heaven where we now but hope?

ROBIN LAMPSON.

BISHOP BRANDON'S WINDOW

A WINDOW, not to view the lacquered spread
Of empty worlds on the tapered edge of night
But one to let in gold and virgin white,
Cold purity and quick redemption-red,
Dawn-glow, day-smile, the all-too-shyly-fled
Resplendence in the west ; one that not quite
Excludes the rising song of birds in flight,
Wing-borne into the silence overhead.

How many times the filtered light has lit
The Briton blue that shone within his eyes,
Or made an irised halo for his head
As he elucidated Holy Writ ;
The same light filters now from Memory's skies,
The same light makes a halo for the dead.

ARTHUR TRUMAN MERRILL.

MORE CRITICISM FROM ARTHUR HOOD.

(*To the Editor of* THE POETRY REVIEW.)

MUSIC AT NIGHTMARE !

To aver that one cannot understand a poem generally brings down wrath and contempt on one's lack of " soul," and crass stupidity. However, at the risk of incurring this devastating condemnation, I am constrained to inquire whether the verses entitled " Music at Night," by Robin Anderson, in the January–February POETRY REVIEW mean what the lines convey ?

It opens with a terrifying description of a " drawing-room," in which " coppergreen " chords chase " round and round "—the wireless gone wrong, doubtless—and then to add to the discomfort, the roof apparently is missing, for the " silken rains " come " rippling down." And they ripple down a " magic ivory tomb." Clearly this is no place for ordinary guests !

But what is a " magic ivory tomb " ? If it is intended to convey the author's idea of a piano the description is hardly felicitous. I confess that I have often ardently desired to bury a pianist but I never dreamed that he, or she, could be squashed into a piano. But perhaps the silken rains had so dissolved the body that with immense effort it might be rammed into the instrument. Yet what an occupation for a pleasant evening ! But worse nightmare is to follow, for the music " rolls along the floor " and even that queer performance does not content it, but it " takes wings of purple thread and flies through the garden-door." Here I feel a touch of sympathy with it for it evidently was trying to out-run those appalling coppergreen chords. (Might one have had bets as to which would win ? the chords or the metamorphosed music ?) But the awful race is cut short by the " nightblue sky," which, not to be outdone, suddenly splits in two. And the strangest touch of all is, that amid these wild happenings, " Lara sits and purrs." Is Lara a gas stove ? for that purrs sometimes. Or was he a tom cat ? I am really interested in Lara, for no earthly creature but a cat would sit maddeningly purring amid such catastrophes (pun not intended). The lamp is the only thing that appears to have any sense, it goes on glowing ; not even the silken rains could put it out. Good lamp !

" TO G.B.S. "(A REPLY TO G. CARLTON).

Compounded of a nimble wit
Coupled to concentrate conceit,
O, rebel from a rebel isle,
You do yourself defeat :
Tilting at windmills—not the Don
But a lean Sancho on an ass,
You fancy you but shake your pen
And earthquakes come to pass.
Let Fate, with unrelenting hand,
But touch your eyes—Then, will you say
That surgeons cannot tie a lace,
Or mould a piece of clay.

* * * * *

All have you won in England, money, fame,
All your own land would have refused,
Your only answer is a sneer ;
You bite the hand you have abused.
Like slaves we bow to every jibe,
Our every protest smoothed away,
For all your worshippers declare
You do not mean the things you say.
Then go to where rebellion reigns
Where blasphemy and want men glean,
Where all is chaos, add your words
By saying what you do not mean.

ARTHUR HOOD.

(NOTE.—Mr. Shaw said that surgeons could not use their fingers, even to tie a boot-lace.)

The *Strand Magazine* breaks new ground in publishing a poem by Rudyard Kipling which, although perhaps not so appealing as the Kipling poem which was a feature of *Pearson's Magazine* in May last, is a notable and welcome departure of this popular magazine.

DYNAMICS OF AMERICAN POETRY : XLII

STANTON A. COBLENTZ has gained the thoughtful approval of a growing following through his writings since 1923. In this review we are considering his last book, *The Enduring Flame*, a sequence of forty-eight sonnets. One of the greatest hurdles in the realm of poetry is such a sonnet sequence. Each year there are more writers who chance it. We know that in Mr. Coblentz's poetry we will not find the exaggerated sensationalism that passes for poetry but thoughtful weaving of his impressions in accepted form. These are qualities to be thankful for. His dedication gives a key " To all seekers of *The Enduring Flame*, the book is appreciatively dedicated."

I turn to the first sonnet :

Here on a hooting, thunder-footed train
I lounge and watch the storm-washed fields go by,
And fancy how, to some all-seeing eye,
The years would pass like landscapes drenched in rain,
With now a hillock, now a blackened plain,
Now a green gully, now a violet dell
Where wings are fluttering and cool waters well—
All fading like cloud-mansions of the brain !

And in my mind the old, old wonder burns—
What shall be left when the whole flight is done
More than the gale leaves when its combs have run
Among the idiot dunes ? Oh, pool that yearns
To hold the starlight ! Moth that never learns
The tragical remoteness of the sun !

And the second :

It comes to me how that imperious Will
Which shapes our days has driven me through time,
To love and hope, to model many a rhyme,
Till now, when life seems scarce unfolded still,
I find my footsteps halfway up the hill
To the allotted ending of the span,
Dreading my hours may close as they began,
Blind to the Master-Source of good and ill.

But this at least I hold : our lives would be
More aimless than the brutish waves that pound
The blind, basaltic barriers of the sea,
Unless, before the darkness drapes us round,
The clouds were cloven, and some gleam were found
To guide us nearer to the ultimate key.

The octave from the twelfth :

Perhaps, could we but find a master key
To make the signboard of the heaven plain,

To read the language of the wind and rain
And the calm wisdom locked in flower and tree,
We would no longer storm at destiny
With *Why* and *Wherefore*, but would grow and pass
Unquestioning as the bluebell, or the grass
When autumn burns her yellow pageantry.

And the sextet of the thirty-third :

But, in the consoling spaciousness of time,
There will be room to compensate all loss
And resurrect all beauty from the mire.
What though the lily's face be marred with grime
Thrown by some random wind, since it shall toss
Once more with cheeks of white, unsullied fire ?

The reader here will find substantiated the claim of this reviewer. Here is nothing too personal. The sequence is a fine reach and a good capture. The tide which carries these overflowing lines is deep and strong and the writer is sincere.

From the same publishers, The Paebar Company, arrives Evelyn Watson's latest book, *Jewel Dust.* It is the prize book in their international competition, resulting in the receipt of more than one thousand book-length manuscripts and has been awarded first place exclusively. The publishers state :

" Paebar has been eager to find one book to represent the modern poetry which is not too bizarre, which is enriched by glowing mirth, colour, and an underlying philosophy of our own age, each poem accenting beauty for its own sake. The indefatigable Buffalo poet has provided just such a book."

Miss Watson called her volume *Jewel Dust.* In the shining group of poets perhaps those writers who have had to overcome some tremendous physical short-circuit should wear more than the poet's halo. If there is anything more worthy, Evelyn Watson belongs to it, but how could you know it in her exuberant enjoyment of all beautiful things, her lively and living experience of the precious gifts all about us, how could you know it ?

Mary Owen Lewis writes me :—

" I am enclosing a few words on the aspect of poetry which occurs to me most of all at the moment, in view of the emotional and spiritual thinness of American life.

Romance is whimsical and lights
On many a perch for rest ;
But through her migrant days and nights
Returns to make her nest
In some beloved, familiar place
Where song and verse may cling,

As lichens give to bark a grace
No wood alone can bring.

" These lines form a stanza of a poem on Old Heidelberg which I wrote last summer, while penetrated once again with the charm of that Rhine and Moselle region which recalls so much of the romance of European legend and history. In the midst of writing it I thought of the varied beauty of my own country, its vitality, its raw and stirring contrasts, and I felt it the part of a tiresome imitator to go on adding lichens to the bark of Europe, instead of enriching the infrequently sung soil of America, which needs so much the deepening that only the poets in every branch of art can give. So I have stopped singing in praise of the loveliness that generations of human experience have warmed; and I hope, through my latest volume of verse, *Tower Window*, and others still awaiting publication, to cut with a bright edge the comparatively virgin soil of American life, that when my little songs, with those of others who have preceded me, are ploughed under, it may yield richer harvests of the spirit for lives to come."

Tower Window is divided into two parts; " Overlooking the City " is the first. It is everyday experience as illustrated in " The Blue Shirt " which we give:

In the trolley car the tired men and women
Ride home from their work,
Business woman, neatly dressed,
" White-collar " men.
Crowded between them sits just one " blue shirt."
His rough grey trousers and shoes are white with plaster.
The others draw away from him.
And he looks off, or inward,
Conscious of self and clothes.

Yet he is lithe and symmetrical of body.
(A Meunier's hand should use him for a statue,
When he sweeps a long stroke with a plastic grace.)
And during the noon hour,
I heard him discussing Plato,
Over an onion sandwich.

From the second portion of the book—" Facing North or South "—" Parrot Tulips " is charming:

Heart of Egypt!
Cleopatra, Iris, Charmian,
The long frieze of Nile-born women,
Flaming, unafraid,
Live to lure again through your uneven petals,
Where they droop so silken,
Jewelled in a thousand different ways,
Or open their sun-warmed colours like a frame
Around the sombre heart.

Arthur Truman Merrill, whose new book, *Clover Breath*, we are reviewing next, says of Mary Owen Lewis:

> "As poet, she sees swiftly, surely; as humanitarian, she sees tenderly. She is equally at home as nature priestess or as apostle of man. I can honestly say that her work satisfies me as that of few of our contemporaries, combining as it does both intellectual appeal and æsthetic attraction—a rare combination."

Clover Breath (The Driftwind Press) in its forty-three pages teems with New England enjoyment. This reviewer, hailing from Vermont, cannot pass "Midsummer Hour":

The year has focussed on this hour,
It is a miracle come true,
Summer with her sun-bright flower
Under sky of blue.

The breeze is swaying meadow-grass,
The air is clover-sweet,
While fleecy clouds in silence pass
Above the noonday heat.

The cows are lying down to rest
Upon the wooded hill,
The farmyard, lately noise-obsessed,
Has now gone strangely still.

How man by memory is blessed,
Three thousand miles away
My quivering nostrils are caressed—
Vermont is mowing hay!

The sons and daughters of Vermont are accredited with uncommon driving force and history does not disprove this. Perhaps it dates back to the hay-making days of July, and the warmth of the good sun, and the silver of a big moon—who shall say. A sonnet called "Winding Roads" carries the wayfarer through familiar scenes:

There is a subtle charm in winding roads,
In roads that follow like adaptive streams
A hill's wild will, a flowering meadow's dreams
Of lying lazy in the sun, no goads
Spur one to leave since buttercup abodes
Are goals attained; and yet such roads it seems
Will conjure up a sudden world that teems
With everything between the antipodes.

I knew a road that had an urge to go
Forever on and on—just anywhere
By lake and hill and sea and river's flow,

It twisted, turned, and curved with vagrant air
Until no place was left to go, and so
It grew a buttercup and tarried there.

Arthur Truman Merrill has recently found review in these pages of his *White Music* and *Songs of the Scythe*, and he is known to all readers as a POETRY REVIEWER.

In a letter Allan Tate says :

> " It is nice to know that Mrs. Bartlett is reviewing my book —*Poems* 1921–1928 (Scribners)—and I do wish that I could say something about it that might interest her and her readers. What poets say about their own work is often irrelevant, and nearly always a rationalization of their motives for writing. As for modern poetry as a whole, it is too confused to let us say anything very general about it. The ideas and beliefs that sustained poets in the past have not so much decayed—most poets ' believe ' in them—as people think. It is rather that the external properties of civilization have changed, making these ideas no longer a part of ordinary life. The poet tries to recover them, and to define them anew in terms of a life that is gradually destroying them."

Here is a necromancer of words, but let not this sentence carry with it the suggestion that through his uncommon lines there does not run a fine cerebral activity and theme.

Attention is called to the warmth in his poem " Mother and Son," of which we give the first stanza :

Now all day long the man who is not dead
Hastens the dark with inattentive eyes,
The lady of the white hand, of the erect head,
Stares at the cover, leans for the son's replies
At last to her importunate womanhood
That hand of death laid on the living bed ;
Such is the fierce compositor of blood.

There are lines that ring after the book is closed :

Men cannot live forever
But they must die forever
So take this body, at sunset
To the great stream whose pulses start
In the blue hills, and let
These ashes drift from the Long Bridge
Where only a late gull breaks
That deep and populous grave
Whose heart with memory shakes.

. . . . .

And the long sleep by the cool river
They've slept full and long, till now the air
Waits twilit for their echo—the burning shiver
Of August strikes like a hawk the crouching hare.

Allan Tate's ancestors were Irish, Scotch-Irish, and English, and his verse and critical outlook are to be found in all the leading reviews in magazines. He chooses to live on a farm overlooking the Cumberland river near Clarkesville, Tennessee. There is a fine tension that suggests Humbert Wolf's " Requiem " in his "Ignis Fatuus."

In the twilight of my audacity
I saw you flee the world : the burnt highways
Of summer gave up their light : I
Followed you with the uncommon span
Of fear-supported and disbursed eyes.

Towards the dark that harries the tracks
Of dawn I pursued you only. I fell
Companionless. The seething stacks
Of corn-stalks, the rat-pillaged meadow
Censured the lunar interior of the night.

High in what hills, by what illuminations
Are you intelligible ?

ALICE HUNT BARTLETT.

ECLIPSE

NOT only was the garish sunlight lost
In swift annihilation ; greed and care—
The low ambitions that we worldlings share,
The feverish fears with which our souls are tossed,
Were all obliterated. Man's desire
Uplifted, with his eyes. As vision grew,
With deeper knowledge of a marvel new,
His heart was kindled from that dying fire.

And, shining faintly forth, as darkness spread,
(Like stars, new-wakening in awed surprise
To one more moment's joy of Paradise,)
Worship and praise were born, to banish dread.
Above all earthly shadows, human thought
Rose heavenward with the wonder that God wrought.

ELISE FELLOWS WHITE.

PATTERN IN POETRY

MR. CHARD POWERS SMITH, in *Pattern and Variation in Poetry* (Scribners, 15s.) reveals fine sensibility and alert intelligence. He knows that it is the critic's business to say something and not to rhapsodize. And because he has something to say he finds it easy to avoid the pothole. The book is crammed with quotations which illustrate his argument that imagination can be identified with the perfect ratio between pattern and variation and almost invariably he succeeds in saying something to enhance the reader's appreciation of the poem.

But, nevertheless, the book is disappointing. Mr. Smith does not seem to be aware of that which is " the general-common-denominator of our sentiments and emotions." " Character," one may say, is that which may be foreseen, " personality " is that which cannot be foreseen and yet, in retrospect, appears to be part of a recognizable pattern. This distinction, which corresponds roughly to the distinction between classic and romantic but is in some ways a more useful weapon to the critic, is one which might have been of very great value to Mr. Smith, and it was outlined by Professor Read in a well-known American critical magazine some time before Mr. Smith's book appeared. In spite of these omissions, however, Mr. Smith does present a great deal of material which no other critic can afford to ignore : the value of his book is independent of the work of the modern school of critics ; he does not mention Sir Richard Paget's work on the relation of speech and gesture, Dr. I. A. Richard's discussion of poetry in strict psychological terms or Mr. Empson's interesting discovery that many of the most striking passages in English poetry owe their effects not to any mysterious music, but to complex ambiguity of meaning. Nor does Mr. Smith seem to be acquainted with the valuable distinction made by Professor Herbert Read in his admirable booklet *Form in Modern Poetry* (Sheed and Ward, 2s. 6d.).

Professor Read distinguishes between organic form, which arises from the subject matter and mechanical form which is imposed from outside, and he relates this dichotomy to the psychological distinction between " character," which is something willed by the subject, and " personality " and validity of his main thesis. Professor Read also makes a number of very enlightening incidental remarks, and for students of criticism his book is the best value for money which has appeared for some time.

The publisher, in a note on the wrapper of Mr. Montgomerie's poems (*Via*, published by Boriswood, 5s.) says : " These poems are the work of a young writer who is not afraid of expressing what most poets to-day seek to escape, under the mistaken idea that they must remain within some mysterious world of poetry which has no connection with life and its obvious problems."

Wordsworth, with greater justice, made the same claim, and although Mr. Montgomerie sometimes shows a delicate ear for rhythm, as in *Waterfall*:

> The clouds are blown over the hill,
> The primrose in the glen is still;
> Here are ferns, where by the brown
> Smooth rock the water falls down,

more often he allows a conventional technique—whether it be the Victorian convention or the convention of the less successful free-verse writers—to distort and twist that which he attempts to express.

Mr. Montgomerie is, however, typical of the younger writers in that he not only protests against unnecessary poverty and suffering, but also sees that they can and must be abolished in our time. But his vision is less clear and his accent less convincing than that of Mr. Stephen Spender, whose first book of poems, which really has been "eagerly awaited," has now appeared from Faber and Faber (5s. net). Some of Mr. Spender's poems were already known through the volume of *New Signatures* issued by the Hogarth Press, and the present book more than fulfils their promise. To Mr. Spender, the magnificent machines of our modern civilization are not "difficult" poetic material to be worked in at all costs; they are beautiful in themselves, as naturally as a harebell or a violet:

> More beautiful and soft than any moth
> With burring furred antennae feeling its huge path
> Through dusk, the air-liner with shut-off engines
> Glides over suburbs and the sleeves set trailing tall
> To point the wind. Gently, broadly, she falls
> Scarcely disturbing charted currents of air.

And again, the same effective imagery and the same use of sound both for suggestion and for verbal music appears in *The Express*:

> After the first powerful plain manifesto
> The black statement of pistons, without more fuss
> But gliding like a queen, she leaves the station.
> Without bowing and with restrain unconcern
> She passes the houses which humbly crowd outside,
> The gasworks and at last the heavy page
> Of death, printed by gravestones in the cemetery.

It is good writing, and unlike the best writing of the past fifteen years, it is essentially English, as English as Marvell, Blake or Wilfred Owen, and it is, furthermore, honest. That is to say, Mr. Spender is sufficiently master of his technique to compel it to score his purposes and to express his own clear vision. And that vision sees without sentimental blur our present failure to use the inventions of the engineer and scientist for the common good:

> —There is no consolation, no, none
> In the curving beauty of that line

Traced on our graphs through history, where the oppressor
Starves and deprives the poor.

Paint here no draped despairs, no saddening clouds
Where the soul rests, proclaims eternity.
But let the wrong cry out as raw as wounds
This Time forgets and never heals, far less transcends.

That courage and economy of statement, which, here as always, are found united to understanding, sensibility and skill, makes Mr. Spender's one of the very few outstanding books of recent years. In achieving simplicity without humbug, and strength without harshness, he shows that poetry at last is emerging from the squabbles and confusion of the past ten years.

In this new volume by Mr. Robert P. Tristram Coffin, *The Yoke of Thunder* (Macmillan, 7s. 6d.), we are again held in the grip of his vitality and his decisions. The incisive couplets that are his favourite medium of expression take upon themselves an epigrammatic force from his beautiful economy of words as well as from his searching thought. They soften into tenderness in a poem like " Go to a Barn with a Lantern " and become blade-sharp in " People in High Houses." Much of his contemplation is upon the creative love behind such miracles as fire-flies, barnacles, starfish, bats, and humming birds. It recurs in " Wild Geese at Night " :

And people hearing them returned
To the slumber they had earned.
   It could not be there was no goal,
   No plan to pattern, not a soul
Sitting calm somewhere above
With palms above some lamp of love
   And planning new and keener things,
   When these exquisite pairs of wings,
Built so clean and long and right,
Helped one another in their flight.

The most significant poem in the book is " A Buck's Head on the Wall," from which we quote the last four verses :

And who knows but the great, mysterious shape
   We feel has eyes on all the things we do,
Between the cradle and the grave, is such
   Another sightless head, if we but knew ?

Another such a head hung bodiless
   Upon the walls we build to close us in,
While he who really is the one we seek
   Goes far and lightly past the thought of sin.

Goes far and lightly, graceful as a buck
  That dips his hooves in crystal of the dew
And never yet has bent his neck to come
  Inside the walls his bright brain never knew.

And never yet has guessed his branching head,
  As stately and as kindly as a tree,
Could come to be a symbol of a fear
  To creatures who must bow to agony.

Miss Mary Gamble in her book, *The Heron and other Poems* (Elkin Matthews, 3s.) is urged to write, not for the sake of mere "self expression" but because she is sensitive to the sordid evils of this country and labours to remove them. By setting the slums in contrast to natural beauty she does much to open our eyes. When she can point the human beauty underneath the squalor and persisting in spite of it she will open them wider still. Her command of verse is strong enough to enable her to depend often upon rhythm rather than metre for her cadences; her command of diction will be increased when she has grown to discard such vague "poeticisms" as "wondrous scene," "boundless sea," "endless strife," which obtrude here and there. She sums up the picture of a mining village most excellently in the reiterated line; "The waste land lies across the dirty street."

The title poem in Miss Gertrude Bartlett's little volume of verse, *The White Bird* (MacMillan, 7s. 6d.) "is a romance woven about the French war ace, Nungesser, and his tragic disappearance." The tale is one of real beauty, albeit the manner of telling cloys a little at times; straightforwardness of diction is too often sacrificed to the exigences of the imitative French style. Miss Bartlett uses the old French forms for many of her accompanying poems, and, though the forms are lovely in themselves, drained of the language they were designed to hold, they do not always re-fill satisfyingly with another, as "Rondeau of April" shows:

Where Love is Lord of April's sky,
When April woods afar and nigh
  Are fragrant with young buds that blow
  In cups of gold and drifts of snow,
Would one dear youth his books put by
To dream with me, while up on high
Through tuneful boughs the soft winds sigh,
  A sweeter lore he'd learn I trow
    Where Love is Lord.
But he, because the world's awry,
In close seclusion ponders why,
  Or how with reason he may show

That stars from cosmic atoms grow,
And loveless 'mid the leaves sit I
Where Love is Lord.

Africa, a Book of Verses, by Ethel Campbell is somewhat disappointing . . . perhaps we expected much of one so brothered and so reared. The love of both countries is here, of her own and ours, but it is sentimentalized by weak diction and weak verse forms. The passages and poems in pentameter lines are the best and suggest that, since rhymes are used more as a bell than a bridle, the writer would ride her Pegasus more vigorously if she wrote blank verse.

THE ENGLISH MUSE

In *The English Muse* (Bell, 16s.) Dr. Oliver Elton does for English poetry what others have been doing in other branches of art and science —he gives a plain, judicious and juridical outline of English poets and poetry without enthusiasm but still with an apparent love and devotion for his subject as well as an entire competency in dealing with it. His range is wide, from the first examples to the present day, and in consequence he is able to prove and insist on the continuity of English poetry and of its living qualities throughout the ages, a breath of life that has never grown stale and expired, hence this is an important and very much to be commended book which we hope will be widely read and used, the more so because Mr. Elton is little concerned about origins and expert theories and texts but is among those who constitute The Poetry Society—one who regards poetry " as a material part of their life and religion," one of the four great powers to which the emotional destiny of mankind is committed. Being so much in agreement with him we need not attempt to follow him textually and critically through his long thesis. But we are pulled up rather suddenly at the end. We find that the modern influences and contributions to the wide stream of English poetry are less significant than we believed ; that various minor people are included out of all proportion to the preceding part of the book ; that the major poets of our time and generation are not mentioned while men of less significance are brought into close communion with Chaucer, Milton and Tennyson. The writer seems to have lost his earlier qualities of aloofness and independence and to be no longer the wise, calm, concentrated, dispassionate assessor. We find, however, that this change of poise is due to actually living writers being excluded from mention while admission is granted to anyone of recent times associated with poetry who had happened to die and thereby evidently pass into immortality before this book was published. Hence the lack of proportion of the later chapters, proving, if it was necessary to prove it, that it is wiser to stop such a survey or history before our own immediate period. Moreover, the last chapter would seem to be rather the work of a syndicate than of the writer of the preceding part of the book—a syndicate responsible for the prevailing tone of criticism and arbitrary individualistic assignment of values.

As a separate book *Modern English Poetry*, by R. L. Mègroz (Nicholson and Watson, 8s. 6d.) might be regarded as an independent appendix to *The English Muse* if the latter had stopped a little earlier. Mr. Mègroz takes nearly 300 demy-8vo pages to survey fifty years of English poetry and verse and his publishers make great claims for his qualifications for this very delicate task of contemporary critic. But we cannot regard him as impartial; he has his definite favourites, particularly those on whom he has already written volumes in more detail, even to the extent of describing the honour of a walk from the poet's house to the tram-lines, and he also appears to have gathered together all the critical jargon, prejudices and extravagancies of the last twenty years without revaluing these transitory fashions of opinion in the light of their later staleness or entire refutation. Tennyson and Stephen Phillips are still to be sneered at and discredited, Sir William Watson and Alfred Noyes ignored or scurvily dismissed, and various minor writers who are not likely to survive their own generation exalted into pioneers and authentic voices. Mr. Mègroz is too much of a journalist, the writer for the immediate hour, but here and there he does show some acute critical discernment and individuality of opinion.

Two new monumental anthologies should be added to the library with *The English Muse*. One is *A Collection of English Poems from* 1660 *to* 1800, selected by Ronald Crane, Professor of English in the University of Chicago (Harper Bros., 15s.) which gives a really representative collection of English and Scotch poems published during this period on a sufficiently generous scale to enable students and others to judge of achievement and variety and style without having to draw upon more adequately equipped libraries. This lengthy period anthology is the more important and timely on account of the recent revival of critical interest in and enthusiasm for the eighteenth-century poets who have come more into notice as the obscuring nineteenth-century men have receded. After 1100 deep set pages of selections the Editor gives a good deal of data and other material for the study of the poetry of the period he covers. A companion volume is the new *Oxford Book of Sixteenth-Century Verse* (8s. 6d.) chosen by Sir E. K. Chambers with the help of Professor Elton. This intensive anthology of course precedes the former and should have a primary place in the poetry library for here we are given in ample measure the real beginnings of English poetry, pioneer poetry, plentifully embroidered, with the year at the spring and all the emotions, lusty and ardent, and all the subjects of life and nature to their choice. Allowing for the songs grouped under one heading, the volume contains about 500 pieces, some of them quite long, including the 500 lines of the rough draft of Raleigh's *The Ocean to Cynthia*, and two dozen pages of Marlowe's *Hero and Leander*, and almost 100 pages from Edmund Spenser. Many of the shorter lyrics, including a large number of anonymous ones, will be found an exquisite delight. We ought to again mention here, in connection with the above and particularly as an accompaniment to *The English Muse* in which Professor Elton indulges in little quotation, the *From Spenser to Arnold Anthology* recently published by Macmillan, to which we referred in our last issue. Here is a combination of new volumes most important to the student of English poetry.

Mr. Charles Williams has succeeded in three years in earning for himself a reputation as a critic, a novelist, and a poet. He has intelligence, persuasive power and a sense of humour, and his critical works, though they sometimes leave the reader asking : What, after all, has he said ?, do serve to intensify the reader's appreciation of poetry in general and particularly of that poetry which, in its deep concern for the persistent problems of existence, comes nearest to religion. His new book : *The English Poetic Mind* (Oxford, 7s. 6d. net) is based, he says, on two convictions, first that *Troilus and Cressida* is of great importance in the study of Shakespeare, and second, that the central crisis of *Troilus* is directly related to the culminating point in Wordsworth's account of his own history in *The Prelude*. For studying English poetry from this starting point, the problem of value and the relations of the worlds of value, one is compelled to omit or pay scant attention to the more nearly classical and Catholic poets, Chaucer, Dryden, Pope, for the problem (though Mr. Williams does not seem to see this) is one which can only arise for the Protestant or freelance philosopher. But Protestantism *is* the English habit of mind and the problem of value has produced some of the greatest of English poetry, and Mr. Williams may justly claim to have done something to elucidate the workings of the " English Poetic Mind."

THREE TYPES

The Vision of Fra Barloto, Sonnets and Lyrics, by HELEN HAMILTON. (D. Wyllie and Sons, Edinburgh.)
Arid, by PHILLIPS KLOSS. (Macmillan and Co.)
The Eaten Heart, by RICHARD ALDINGTON. (Chatto and Windus.)

" All may be poets." Let us assure all Helen Hamiltons that this is rank heresy. It is given to a very limited number to be poets. And with the passing of the years it becomes more and more difficult to place widely differing verse-writers. Here are lines in the old manner :

" All may be poets. Life itself may be
Compared into a poem finely wrought ; "—

Here is the cry from a new outlook :

" Do you know you live in a prison ?
Do you know your own loneliness ?
. . . never know you are in deathly solitude."

Here, yet another :

" What we have not, we wish.
Poverty is the osmotic pressure of existence,
Thin flowing to thick, and thick alternating."

The first seems to rise from an arid complacency, the second from a discontent with, or an upbraiding of, life that many pride themselves on experiencing. The third from an unfruitful desire to attain originality by forcing prose to don poetic garb.

The Helen Hamiltons we know. " I tuned my lute at daybreak." We confess to a little weariness of this too ever-ready lute, then, in *Love Pleads* the subject has been so superlatively treated by a great poet that it cannot be repeated by any less than he. " In this life-span thou canst nowise dissever Thyself from Me." The Heavenly Hound outruns this altogether.

The Richard Aldingtons have pitched their tents in the vale of bitterness. They cry out brutally that, so doing, they may stab. " O stab, till you sob with pain," and the stab and the sobbing may be as salutary as the surgeon's knife, or, on the other hand, it may be merely the desire to murder old values. But, as he writes in evident sincerity, we are bound to study his words with equal effort. The chief verses are " The Eaten Heart," which gives the volume its title. He says,

" I think we were right to go groping in all forbidden places,
Uncovering horrors politely forgotten."

And he cries, somewhat savagely, that sex satisfaction cannot be the ultimate aim of desire—

" But who would die for sex ? "
—" Will you die for a blind hot instinct,
The rut of insect and beast ? "

(This should " flutter the dove-cots " if there are any left !) But have not all men, who have been lifted above the common herd instinct, known this ? Recognized it ? and at times, loathed the physical urge that deluded and blinded them ? Surely it is as old as the everlasting hills ? What we discover the author to say finely is this :

" I do not deny the body, I praise it.
That is where Petrarch and Dante err—
But the tragedy of thwarted sexual desire is nothing,
The true tragedy is that of utter loneliness,
Philoctetes agonizing on his lonely isle."

Alas ! how many countless souls must echo this cry of ultimate " deathly solitude." The bitter brutality that he has edged much of his work with detracts from, rather than adds to, the weight of his argument (using argument as older writers were wont to do). Of the shorter poems six of these flutter down without any use of punctuation whatsoever, and three boast no capital letters save and except for the first person singular. Are these tricks worthy of an artist ? Robespierre also wrote without using capitals save I except for himself—" I." Granted that poets may laudably desire to turn the world upside down, yet the " sea-green incorruptible " is hardly a happy idealist to imitate. And why not go, as they say, the whole hog ? as thus :

Willingly i come to tea no
She is dead in parcel
post your book i wished to see no
  hope recovery i
  will talk of it and she
  s dead i know of you we
  ll talk at tea.

But, seriously, is this so very far removed from Aldington's lines which run thus :

" Grasp too eagerly with the childs
  so absolute stomachic yearning
  to absorb but continuity
  means something and love grows
  river-like tree-like yes "

This is grievous when he has matter that is worth the saying.

The Phillips Kloss type seem to aim at reclothing things we know in adjectives that are old and inappropriate.

From *Arid*: Verses concerning a certain Tenorio in a brown coat too long in the sleeves, who came home drunk and meandered about his garden with a tall friend, and then was " deathly sick." His wife guarded him from this same tall friend,

" She stood in the same garden with her three sons around her,
  She berated the friend, who humorously threatened her,
  But her three sons moved forward, and he went away."

We fear it would be undignified to echo Charley's Aunt and cry, " Well, that's a damned funny story ! "

Another " poem " describes a scene :

" Turquoise condenses the desert :
  The drenched blue sage springing into the light,
  The movement of brown arms with silver bracelets,
  The avalanch cuttings of a mountainside,
  The sky precipitated in stone."

In what fashion can sky be " precipitated " ? If intended chemically it conveys the idea that this sky cast a sediment of stone, or, if it suggests " hurled in haste " how is that performed ? Either way it seems hardly a comfortable " inverted bowl " to reside under. Such lines are not rooted in sincerity, but in that disastrous desire to be " original."

What, therefore, shall we say ? Helen Hamilton writes prettily of what is not of overpowering interest. Richard Aldington arrests our attention, even if with some distaste at his methods, and then wanders away into formlessness. Phillips Kloss writes in ugly fashion of matters that may possibly interest himself. As to fully comprehending all that these poets assail our ears with, frankly, we find Blake's poems simplicity itself in comparison.

THE POET AS NOVELIST.

Mr. Richard Church continues his mellifluous portraits and descriptions in his third novel, *The Prodigal Father* (Dent, 7s. 6d.), which throughout bears traces in apt phrasing and vivid delineation of the poet's particular faculty, as well as in the apparent understanding of the idiosyncrasies of temperament. The latter gives an absorbing human interest to the story, and the former maintains the fine style, of which the following paragraph is a fair instance :—

> " The Heath was quiet, and husband and wife enjoyed the peacefulness. An aeroplane droned overhead, its music adding to the sense of summer heat and indolence. One or two human figures scattered about the hill-side, passing from one tree-shadow to another ; a box-kite flying over Parliament Hill Fields ; some bare limbs flashing from the swimming pond ; these were the only signs of life. The trees sat like hens, heavy with their foliage, slumbering in the sunlight, almost dull by contrast with the quivering and glittering air that surrounded them. The road up to the Stone Pond was in shadow, bordered by the same trees that Keats and Coleridge stood under when they stopped to shake hands and for Coleridge to prophesy death. The age of motor-cars, even the earlier age of the railway, slipped back, not even retained by the mournful note of the aeroplane, that Virgilian bee-sound. The afternoon was timeless, like a painting by Claude ; the near melting into the distant, tone beyond tone in a time-and-space harmony which brought all the ages together into a fixed and present moment of breathless immortality."

Mr. Eric Linklater has caught the poetic spirit of the old sagas in *The Men of Ness*, which may be taken as a prose idyll although the times and folk were rough and forthright, constituting a brave talk of Viking fighters and pacifists, from whom may be traced the fervent Scottish nationalism which animates Mr. Linklater in both prose and verse. Skallagrim's wild and unfortunate voyage is a vivid epic.

Of a different calibre, telling the woeful story of a frustrated poet, is *One Dagger for Two* by Philip Lindsay (Cassell's, 2s. 6d.), who has apparently made a very close study of Christopher Marlowe and his contemporaries. It is a depressing story, relieved by some fineness of characterization and of the poetic genius that insists on emerging, and occasionally proving that " there is a greatness in life," as Kyd said, " that is greater than art." Marlowe is shown as living in Rother Lane off Thames Street. " It was not a savoury area ; it stank of rotten meat and bad fish, but Marlowe had one of those hard stomachs over which smells have no control." Here he was surrounded by boon companions of a similar nature and endowment : " Nashe first ; then Peele, now in the country, and after Peele, Kyd. They appealed to different parts of Marlowe's mind: Nashe to his brutal side, to his hatred of life; Peele to his merry side; Kyd to his sentiment. Four fine minds, they drank day by day because they had nothing else to do. What did life hold for these men? A little comfort drawn out to a quiet death, or a swift and roaring floodtide of drink rushing them to a sudden grave? They had no other alternative. Money made suddenly is never kept. If they had had incomes, they might have worked, have married and lived quietly. As it was, kept by patrons, going for weeks without food, working to order at the whims of stage-manager and bookseller, living upon their wits—what else was there for them to do other than to fling themselves into debauch? They were of no class, neither of the labourers who worked all day for a few pence, nor of the merchants who looked aghast upon their dangerous knowledge. They had no women for friends, save serving-maids and women of the streets; what other women could they know? They were wanderers in a dirty world, surrounded by all the filth and the wealth of Elizabethan London; on one side of them, the gay and richly-costumed Court life, to which neither birth nor money gave them entrance; on the other the crude lusts of the underworld. Shakespeare is little more than a passing shadow amongst his riotous contemporaries, as he had little inclination for drink, but we have more of George Chapman, with the warty nose, a big, amiable fellow, and of the nervous Thomas Walsingham, and of all the Frizers, Poleys and other traitors who eventually brought Marlowe to a traitorous and mischancy end, with all his fine aspirations spilled like his fine lines, which, however, were gathered up and now constitute an immortal memory.

Human Being by Christopher Morley, is another poet's novel, a business idyll without sentimentality and a biography within a biography in the peculiar and intimate manner associated with Christopher Morley. We may even guess that Morley is the author of the anonymous *Gold Falcon*, some of the scenes and situations, notably the observatory-like New York eyrie, being very similar in both books, and both come from the same publisher (Faber and Faber, 7s. 6d.). Otherwise these adventures and experiences of the intractable " haggard of love " by an " already very well-known novelist " would seem to originate from the Old Country. What concerns us, however, is not the authorship but the subject of the book—the adventures " in search of freedom and personal sunrise," and incidentally of escape from himself and his own inhibitions of a V.C. airman-poet who had become twice famous, first by his escapades and conspicuous bravery as a Major of the R.F.C. in the War, and subsequently as the author of two books of verse and an autobiographical " Farewell to Poetry." At the age of 33 he had sickened himself of the pleasant pleasures of country life and even of his attractive wife and child and migrated to America, a modern Columbus of the mind. Manfred, the heir to a peerage to which he succeeds before this story is finished, is too introspective and withdrawn and thereby loses much of what he went to America, or rather New York, to find. In his spiritual pilgrimage he is influenced by David Torrence, who apparently is D. H. Lawrence, and his personal friend G. B. Everest, in whom one recognizes Lawrence of Arabia, and Wilfred Owen, his war-time colleague, who is considerably quoted. Other contemporary literary figures pass through the book or are referred to, frequently in a more candid than complimentary manner. Contemporary social life in New York is very vividly entered into, and the many episodes related include the quite startling lecture by Manfred on " Hamlet in Modern Life " for a women's literary club, followed by the same energetic ladies' poets' meeting, at which eight poets declaim their verses, no time being left for number 9—all very amusingly and not too cynically described ; in fact the lecture is not only arresting but Manfred himself got a distinct punch from it.

We are reluctant to conclude that both *The Gold Falcon* and *Human Being* are novels of frustration. In some senses both are allegorical pictures of the contemporary spirit in literary and business life, and both might have been written by D. H. Lawrence to illustrate the quotation given in the review in this number of THE POETRY REVIEW of Richard Aldington's latest book. In both there is the cruel tragedy of " Philoctetes agonizing on his lonely isle."

THE ESSENTIAL SHAKESPEARE

The feature of the early spring publishing has been the number of books concerned with Shakespeare, several of which have not reached us. The new " Great Lives " series of Duckworth very properly starts with a volume on Shakespeare by John Drinkwater, who as a poet and dramatist himself should be able to write the best life of Shakespeare—the life for which we are still waiting and which we are driven to the conclusion only a poet with imagination and insight could produce. The Lee and other painstaking biographies, excellent in their way, are too factual with too few facts to go on to reveal the real Shakespeare. The earnest pedestrian biographer suffers from the same handicap as many speakers of verse—they are too literal and depend too much on bare statements of fact, having little poetic insight or spiritual discernment. The best short presentation of Shakespeare is that " biographical adventure " by J. Dover Wilson published recently by the Cambridge University Press (3s. 6d.) with the title *The Essential Shakespeare*. From an erudite acquaintance with the plays, Mr. Wilson proceeds to suggest rather than describe the essential features of Shakespeare's life and work and the influences under which he lived and produced his enormous output. He thinks of him as a kind of larger and happier Keats, who lived on to tread the *via dolorosa* that Dostoieffsky alone of the moderns has trodden after him, and he reminds us throughout that Shakespeare was a young man—indeed, was never old, for he gave up writing at forty-eight and was only fifty-two when he died. For the mistaken attitude towards Shakespeare and for the presentation of him by Sir Sidney Lee and others as a typical English manufacturer who happened to deal in *Twelfth Nights* and *King Lears* instead of in brass tacks, Mr. Wilson blames the Stratford bust, which, although uninspired, is the only portrait of the poet to have any sort of authority. Mr. Wilson would prefer to view him in the light of another portrait of that period, that of a young poet of twenty-four, which was discovered by the present reviewer in a public-house at Winston-on-Tees in 1907, and for a time was assumed to be an early portrait of Shakespeare himself.

Mr. Drinkwater is of course interesting, but he is not profound and does not give us the poet's biography. He scolds Mr. Wilson a little instead of taking to himself the task that *The Essential Shakespeare* suggests. Mr. Drinkwater, in fact, is content to be pleasantly journalese, and in consequence his little book is not nearly as distinguished as one would have expected from a poet and playwright with a knowledge of stagecraft, the person best qualified perhaps to write the real biography of Shakespeare. Nevertheless, Mr. Drinkwater is certain of his Shakespeare, and has something pertinent to say about his art and mind and reputation, as well as his stage. We do not, however, see the point of his reference to the " lovable " Ronald Ross and other somewhat strained comparisons, and we would like to point out that " Where there is no vision the people perish " should not be credited to Whitman. We, who have used this reminder for above a quarter of a century, may be pardoned for pointing out that its origin is in the Book of Proverbs xxix, 18.

Mr. Wilson advises the writer of the life of Shakespeare to make himself acquainted with what other poets and artists thought of their greatest fellow. Considerable help towards this will be found in the *Short Life* abridged by Charles Williams from Sir Edmund Chambers's William Shakespeare : A Study of Facts and Problems (Clarendon Press, 5s.) which has the George Robey-like bust for frontispiece. The book is one entirely a matter of fact and not of opinion, and is the more valuable because of its list of contemporary allusions to the dramatist and the first folio, thirty-two in all, and a similar number of other references, traditional and otherwise. Here are the bare bones of the biography for which we are waiting.

PERSONALITY IN NEW POETRY

Mr. Rowland Coldicott, who has published his own *Poems and Verses* (10s.) admits to their being written for his own pleasure and mostly during the space of last year. That they are written, whatever the mood or theme, with a creative zest, is always apparent, and we are compelled by its sheer force to share some of that enjoyment in spite of the consciousness that a good deal of the thought is really not quite digested. But there is plenty of courage in it, sometimes fine, sometimes whimsical; and we are not always sure when he is serious or not. "Verses at Night" show his attitude well:

Too tired to-night for the extravagant line
Wherein words sparkle delicately fine,
No goldsmith's work to-night: the eyelids close
Almost, the head is heavy, the brain slows:
Yet—not to accept defeat—the child grown man
Wants to stay up for all the time he can,
Play just a little longer, ere the light
Goes, and completely comes the dreadful night.

This day was good, she lingers, she would try
And so would we, to lengthen her good-bye . . .
Who like to be packed off when problems stand
Unsolved, and books are ranged on either hand?
Life's a brave show and man would fain stay on
Even though the flavour of the fair is gone.
Enough? Who's had enough? Though chords grow slack
And the voice fail, and echo give not back

Her wonted answer, and the sight grow dim,
Who's for the night?
                    Who's rather for the rim
Of one more glorious sun-rise, while the earth
Whirls on, adventurous, cradled for our birth?

After the pronounced impersonality of *The Vortex* and *Babel* one is startled by the strong personal note and the introspection of Mr. Redwood Anderson's new volume, *Transvaluations* (Humphrey Milford, O.U.P., 6s.). His vigorous imagery and language, and his irregular lines with their rhymes coming like orchestral horns at varying intervals, are already well-known and valued, but less so is the mystical intensity such as is shown in these poems. His verbal strength stands him in good stead in making his spiritual apprehensions acceptable to his readers. I do not mean to imply that all the poems are personally introspective; many of them, like "Icarus," "Necropolis," "On Patmos," "Gethsemane," and "The Dead" are quite otherwise. Quotations from "Necropolis" and "Visitation" will show the author both as onlooker and participator:

I stood in Memphis—centuries gone by!
not Memphis of the living: overhead
the lustrous eye of the abyss
brooded, and at my feet
square and street,
the cold Necropolis.

In thousands, there, the Dead,
each sound asleep beneath his coffin-lid,
in mustaba and pyramid
lay hid. . . .

Then from the North there came
a spirit lovely as blowing flame,
who stood and, lifting high
a thin and spiritual cry,
gathered about him in their hosts
the homeless and bewildered ghosts,
and cried in a thin voice aloud :
The Sphinx has smiled !
A moment there,
like smoke upon a windless air,
hung that crowd
—all the living Doubles of the Dead—
motionless . . . then broke and fled
swift to their pyramids,
swift to their mastabas,
passed through their coffin-lids,
entered their stone sarcophagi
and breathed upon their mummies wrapped within.

And all
the pictured life
upon their funerary wall
—painted kiss and sport and strife,
which are the phantoms of their human sleep—
swayed like a thin
arras when a light wind goes by ;
and all the symbols graven deep
upon the heiroglyphic brain
flashed to the lidless inward eye
new meaning—were made plain ;
and they
who read them dreaming, slept, and dreamed again—
a lovelier vision than till then
had ever visited the sleep of men :
the Resurrection of the Dead,
the Coming Forth by Day.

And from " Visitation " :

Let me remember how it was : a sense
of something far remote that, suddenly,
with an immense
and mute velocity
swung down through space

and wrapped me, blessèd, in its cold embrace . . .
and Thou wert here ! and every sound
that lurks in the world's silence hushed and died ;
on every side
the walls like watching ministrants stood round
finger on lip, while overhead
the ceiling, like an angel with wings spread,
hovered ; and all the murmur of the street
passed in an echo of returning feet . . . .

For Thou wert there, beside me and within !
Thou, only Thou !
My heart ceased beating and my breath
went from me like a man's in death ;
my very thinking was afraid to move,
as on my brow
breathed the faint kiss of Thine immortal love. . . .

Now
like one with passion spent,
I sit in silence, and content ;
listening to where, with soft approaching feet,
the world, once more, returns along the street.

There is verbal strength, too, as well as strength of feeling, in David Morton's *Earth's Processional* (Putnam, 10s. 6d.), especially in his favourite verse form, the sonnet, in which, at intervals through the book, he gives pictures and moods of the round year, beginning with " Early Snow " and ending at full circle with " The Autumn Gold is This." Except for a tendency to overwork his images and rhymes, Mr. Morton can give us all the variation we desire—as much as the changing seasons whose themes he uses. " First Snow " shows him at his best :—

The snow came with the dawn, and with the snow
There came the mood that earth had needed most
Since the long turmoil of the gradual, slow
Waking of spring that whitened to a ghost ;
The blossoms ripening to the heavy fruit
Had hung a colored burden on the trees,
That proved to be, at last, no more than loot
For grubbing harvesters on hands and knees.

And then had come a later, sadder season
Of empty staring and of stiff, dark pain,
When life was less a passion than a reason,
Sweetened a little by the singing rain. . . .
Now the snow's gift of quiet was a need
Deeper than roots and planted with the seed.

The *Judas* of Miss Sybil Morley (Basil Blackwell, 4s. 6d.) is a repellent man denied the ordinary affection of his fellows. In this starved state he comes under the intoxicating spell of love, first of a courtesan and then of Christ. In his endeavour to keep both he loses the one on account of his new poverty, and in a fit of jealous hate tries to win it back with a gift worth the Thirty Pieces of Silver, realizing too late what betrayal involved. . . . A bold and not very pleasant experiment in motives. The rhymed couplets are of quick pace and vivid language for the most part, yet in places these very merits get out of hand and cheapen the diction. The story and introspection are related as by the ghost of Judas, and the quoted passage reveals him on the morning of the Crucifixion . . .

I only knew that 'twas through I
Christ was kept to crucify.
The three short years before my eyes
Flashed like a picture in the skies,
And all he'd ever said to me
Was hoarded like a treasury;
And four long years it so befell
I met Ireen beside the well,
And from that hour my Christ betrayed
Because I loved the dark-haired maid.
Then all my life came clamouring
Within my brain, and listening
I learned the secret why all men
Shunned me for their citizen,
And why I always walked alone
A curse, a shadow, and unknown,
Till deep into my heart there came
The dancer with her feet of flame,
And Christ upon the mountain-side
Had come, and all my foolish pride
Was swept away, forgetting all
I followed him in captive thrall,
And Christ I'd sold unwittingly
To die, *to die*, because of *me*!
I saw the vistas of the years
Stretch dead and empty, and the tears,
The hopelessness, the dread unknown
That I could never bear alone,
And covering my eyes I sought
With eyesight shut to shut out thought,
Then wider grew my eyes and wide
I stared upon the mountain-side
And saw stretched out along the land
The rope still held within my hand.

The publisher's note to *The Golden Boat* by Rabindranath Tagore, translated by Bhabani Bhattacharya (Allen and Unwin, 4s. 6d.) gives a very concise explanation of the book :—" This work is a collection of (prose) sketches translated for the first time from the original Bengali. . . . Remarkable sound effects have been produced in some of the stories by the manipulation of rhythm." It is a rhythm that is closely associated with the idiom of allegory, and it is these two factors of rhythm and idiom, combined with an oriental outlook curiously mixed occasionally with an occidental one, that gives this book of fervid mysticism its picturesque beauty.

It is not correct or seemly to minutely dissect verses that spring out of an ardent faith, for only those who share in an equal faith and love can apprehend such poems or choose them for their own. The surprise that *The Divine Aristocrat*, by Pilt Bonarjee (John Beal & Son), contains is that the author has so assimilated the West, he being himself a son of the East. As one of the Wise Men, of whom he says, he comes offering not material gold, but love ; not incense, but adoration ; not myrrh, but joy of soul. The poem under *Prologue* has arresting words, unusual in our ears—" Divine Aristocrat ! Thy Thorn-crowned Head," which reveals in a flash how we have degraded this fine title " Aristocrat " in the West whilst the East has treasured it. In Europe it has sent men to the guillotine, it has been yelled insultingly on the hustings, but the East redeems it and raises it to the high place of its birthright.

Throughout the book many of the lines recall the tender, loving playfulness of the early saints and mystics.

" With ruffian, rogue and rake,
And where foul vermin run ;
Strange holy God should make
Such sport of His dear Son."

In the mere form and trappings of poetic expression, " The Night of the Holy Nativity," and " The Canticle of the Blessed Virgin," are the best and most melodious, but as has been hinted already, rules cannot be bound around the ecstacy of adoring love. The reader must bring something of the rapture and belief of the author—only then can he read with an appreciation fit and due. As a mere matter of accuracy the Kings did not make their prophetic offerings ni the stable but in a house.

Dr. Allen Brockington has treated these themes, but he approaches them from a personal view, that is to say, as one who acted in the scenes he describes, a one who questions, wonders, argues and yet adores. The author of *The Divine Aristocrat* has no words but those of worship, no attitude but that of kneeling. It may be we may close the little book with a faint envy of the flame of the East as contrasted with the pale lights of reason in the West.

We are always interested in poems of place, and think more of this type of verse should be written. The appeal of the English countryside, and particularly of the little places with which their lives had been associated, was an ever-recurrent theme of the soldier-poets, and that feeling of intimacy and of brooding over familiar places continues to find expression in verse that is of greater interest to many than more majestic and more literary poetry. *Patchwork* by E. A. Underhill is of this genre, dealing faithfully and pleasantly and affectionately with Sedgley and its Beacon Hill. Each district should have such a poet-chronicler, and it is no reflection on the poetic qualities of such books to suggest that, as in Mr. Underhill's case, they are more likely to pay their expenses than a more general literary collection. *Patchwork*, which is illustrated by a number of excellent photographs, has run into a second printing.

Another volume of this type is the *Collected Verse of T. Bruce Dilks*, who is concerned chiefly with the Quantock country, and with the flowers and trees of the countryside, mingled with more poems and quaint fancies, such as " How hawthorns become red,"

Rosy hawthorn once was white,
  White as is her snowy sister ;
Blushed she when at end of night
  Dawn on tiptoe stole and kissed her.

THE POETRY REVIEW has already reviewed the first two series of *Songs from the Ship and Castle*. The third series (1s.) includes poems by Edith Allen, Rex Hopes, Donald Hughes, J. W. Norgrove, Elsie Parker and I. F. Sutherland, and two appreciative notes from John Masefield and Edmund Blunden. In the words of Mr. Masefield : " It is delightful to come upon half a dozen bright, gay, and moving individual talents, each with a way of hers or his " and this unpretentious pamphlet does reassure one of the healthy state of poetic appreciation in England, and yet one is inclined to wish that a stronger rhythm, a healthier voice, would break through, even though it would spoil the delicacy of a pleasant game of make-belief. Some of the contributors, Rex Hopes and I. F. Sutherland, for example, have sufficient technical skill to make the reader wonder what their work would be like if they broke through their poetical complacency and whimsical humour and, by writing of the things which really engage their keenest thought and feeling, risked the loss of prettiness by aiming at the beauty of incisive truth.

Poetry of To-day, THE POETRY REVIEW Supplement, has reached its twenty-seventh number and still retains its reputation for containing poems of excellence. There are encouraging proofs of progress among the contributors who have appeared several times before ; some, however, continue to fall into the pitfalls of the novice, where their technique is concerned, and so weaken otherwise distinctive verse. These would do well to take advantage of the school of criticism that the editors of both *Poetry of To-day* and POETRY REVIEW offer at little expense. Even in the matter of stopping, little unconscious blunders give jarring notes to delicately written lines; shades of meaning are unnecessarily blurred and sometimes a wrong or absurd interpretation is the first to reach the reader. The compiler is to be thanked for the catholicity of his choice; many shades of thought are here, for whenever he sees genuine poetic imagination among the many poems submitted to him he selects and plants it, and by so doing bids it grow. Poems particularly noticeable for certain reasons are :—" Acrid Healthy Air " by Philip Bethell, for its vigour and a memorable last verse; " South-County Incantation " by George Loftus, for its descriptive power; " Inland Sea " by E. P. B. Linstead, for its intensity; " To D.E.M." by Alma Gates, " Double Sonnet " by C. M. Jeans, and " On The Death of My Brother " by Dulcie E. Greville, for their poignancy and restraint; " Tattoo " by Redcliffe McKie, for its sustained protest; " The Snare of Spring " by Elsie F. White, for its swift surprise; also her " Queen's Message "; " Hyacinthus " by Arthur Lynnford-Smith, and " Ode " by Mabel K. Toovey, for an ambition well attempted; " The Song of Time " by E. M. Fison for the spirit of the concluding stanzas; " The Stranger " by Alethea T. Anderson, for its quiet and convincing strength; for individuality of thought—" Irrevocable " by C. C. Sheridan, " Contacts " by K. C. Bruce, " The Dreamer " by Lily E. F. Barry, " Two Jewels " by Zuella Sterling, " The Eleven Fifty Nine " by Edith M. Walker, and especially " Clover Breath " by A. T. Merrill:

In the morning
There is thin laughter
In the dew.

In the dawning
And a little after
Thin laughter
In the dew.

Slug-snails are spawning,
Young things are yawning,
Waking with ado.

True to its warning
The sun bursts through—
Where is the laughter?
Where is the dew?

Anthologies of college verse do not often make an appeal to readers outside that college's friendship, but the compilers of *The Book of Armstrong College Verse* have taken such care in their selection that a very thin and very readable volume is the result. For one felicity or another the following poems are noticeable :—" Judgement Day " and " They Remember " by E. Finlay, " Borcovicus " by W. F. Mitchell, " The Hedgehog " by W. K. Richmond, " Resolution " by T. O. Tobinson, " Consolation " by W. E. Scarfe, " Sequence " by J. L. Thompson, and especially all the poems by A. D. L. Wilson. This last remark may appear to savour of favouritism, for Miss Wilson is a frequent contributor to THE POETRY REVIEW, but, in actuality, the book was read and notated before reference to the index to authorship at the end. Perhaps the most appropriate poem to quote is "Tyne Bridge," by S. Norman:

Out and beyond the gaze of the watcher,
Out of the lamp glare, into the silent night
The dizzy girders leap—leap! nor halt
Until the summit of their perfect flight
Is lost among the night winds. Black,
Enormous, starkly, fiercely beautiful,
The steelwork rests before its flight,
An instant, on a slim-cut mountain mass
Of cold, unswerving, clean-edged stone
That serves the Ideal with a holy dignity.

To trace a perfect line, the steelwork spurns
The quiet water lapping at its feet,
And the old houses, torn and thrust aside
To give it foothold.

On the other hand, the compiler of *An Anthology of Student Verse*, verses written by students of Erasmus Hall High School, Brooklyn, N.Y., have been far less selective. She gives us all she could get, apparently, even the "juvenilia." Naturally, there is much here that is trivial, but there are good poems as well. One writer stands out particularly—Edith Lent, who contributes five poems, all of which are written with a poignancy and ease that are distinctive. Other writers who show achievement or promise, or both, are W. Blick, B. Gold, D. Erskine, M. M. De Graff, M. Greenebaum, S. L. Greenspan, R. Kessler, E. Lehnert, H. and I. Meybert, R. M. Morris, N. Palmer, N. Tanchuck, and R. B. Wainwright. The quoted sonnet, "Indian Summer," is by Edith Lent:

This is the time when chilly autumn treads
Too close upon a laggard summer's heels;
Tinges the sumach and the maple, steals
The last bold blossoms in the garden beds.
This is the time when tass'led goldenrod
Blooms with a prodigal and golden haste,
And every growing green thing fears to waste
A moment in this brief recess of God.

Alas, my love, we are less wise than they,
Who bravely bloom until cut down by frost,
Although they know they have forever lost
The first enchantment Summer can display;
Need we acknowledge all our doubt and fear
Until inevitable frost is here?

THE ESSENTIAL WORDSWORTH.

We cannot complain of the neglect of English poets so long as the major poets receive such careful study as Mr. Hugh l'Anson Fausset gives to Wordsworth in *The Lost Leader* (Cape, 12s. 6d.)—a somewhat facile and inappropriate title. He deals step by step with the development of the poet's character, with his boyhood associations and with his love for nature, his later partial breakaway and subsequent attempt to reconcile himself with that nature which so strongly influenced and perpetually surrounded him, a struggle and development that Wordsworth has fully described himself in the *Excursion* and the *Prelude*. Being written in his own poems for all to read who will, it is doubtful whether Mr. Fausset's almost monumental treatise is as helpful and desirable as it superficially appears to be, except that he does show that the influences and co-relations which so deeply concerned Wordsworth have a pertinent relation to the modern world, and that through Wordsworth we can find some help in analysing and resolving our own attitude to and position in the universe. His problems are our problems and therein lies the pertinancy of Mr. Fausset's book, rather than in his attempt to penetrate and refine the secret of Wordsworth's creative frustration and the more objective and material considerations which caused him to be first inspired and later dejected by the French Revolution, and the personal incidents lately revealed and now given undue prominence. Wordsworth was not a "lost leader" except in a partisan sense. His mind could never be reconciled to extravagances and impending anarchy. As Mr. Fausset points outs, "Even in his enraptured youth his spirit had lived aloof and apart. He had known himself to be, in the literal sense of the word, a singular soul, marked out and dedicated for some unique experience, some ultimate communion from which would spring a new revelation to mankind. It was not a spiritual pride, but spiritual necessity, which dictated his conviction that he was not, as other men, for this place and hour, and that he belonged by native right to another and truer condition of existence which it was his destiny to discover or rediscover. And it was because he thus preserved his spirit from the cloudy commerce of the world or from those easy, social, sentimental, or merely intelligent contacts which dim its pure flame that he became a magnet for the powers of earth and air, that the universe spoke to him rememberable things and that in its ghostly language he divined the mighty workings of an eternal demiurge and sensed the sacredness of some primal state." In conclusion Mr. Fausset very finely points out that his "purpose in this book has simply been to suggest through the life-history of a singular man and a great poet something of what those forces demand if mankind is to grow beyond its present stage of conflict. For in Wordsworth, as in all really significant men of the modern world, we can read both the history of the race and the conditions of its future development. In him we can watch the primitive becoming aware of his environment and in his consciousness of fear and rapture moving about in worlds unrealized. We can follow his efforts to establish himself securely without losing touch with the primal fount of his being and his early inspiration. We can see him beginning to express in words his instinctive reactions to life and later to understand, control and order them. And we can mark him reaching the crucial point when knowledge and self-consciousness are in danger of shutting him off from his creative source and turning all his impulses into acts of will and of death."

Dr. Alexander W. Crawford is at considerable pains to interpret *The Genius of Keats* (Stockwell, 6s.), finding considerable assistance thereto from Mr. Fausset, Miss Amy Lowell and others who have preceeded him in tracing the development of Keats from a sensuous to a spiritual love of beauty—a painstaking treatise fully documented, reconciling the various opinions of the various authorities who have previously assumed the very heavy task of interpreting Keats, the more delicate because we all must recognize that,

> " Our meddling intellect
> Mis-shapes the beauteous form of things,"

and that it should be left really to the poets themselves to define themselves, particularly in the case of Wordsworth and Keats, and still more so of Shakespeare, who would have assured us with the former that,

> " Beauty is truth, truth beauty,'—that is all
> Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know."

Less formidable and more workable are the *Poets in Brief*, presented by Mr. F. L. Lucas, a series of volumes published by the Cambridge University Press (3s. 6d. nett), with admirable introductions, especially in the case of Dante Gabriel Rossetti and George Crabbe by the editor. The Beddoes volume, too, is the more welcome because of the comparative inaccessibility of its contents, particularly the letters, and because Beddoes's best work is fragmentary and lies buried in chaotic plays. We might take exception to the treatment of Tennyson and to his suggestion that he has boiled down all that it is necessary to know of him.

The Poems of William Dunbar—the most important of the fifteenth-century Scottish Chaucerians—now appears in a new edition (The Porpoise Press, 5s.)—a scholarly and handy volume, edited by William Mackay Mackenzie, complete with a short preface, a glossary and notes that are of just the convenient length for the ordinary reader. Dunbar's poetry, while conforming to the manifold conventions of mediaeval verse, has a savour all of its own. Boisterous where Chaucer is slyly humorous, harshly satirical where Chaucer merely shrugs a deprecating shoulder, Dunbar brings to his poetry the alternating fiery energy and profound fatalistic melancholy of his race. His poems vary in temper as they vary in form. He tries his hand at each of the many types popular in France and England in the late fifteenth century, dream allegory, religious moralizings, fabliaux, chansons d'aventure, satire, and so forth—and in each case leaves something short but of outstanding interest. His poetry is stimulating through the very force of its contrasts, physical grossness side by side with intense spiritual and religious feeling, direct personal satire together with a love of allegory and abstraction. Herein lies part of the attraction of all mediaeval poetry, but Dunbar, typical as he was of his age, yet brings to his verse an added piquancy of his own, partly due to the vividness of his Scots dialect (ugsome, meaning repulsive is a good example of his vocabulary), and partly due to the enormous gusto with which he writes. Obviously Dunbar enjoyed his own poetry, and, even after the course of more than four centuries, his enthusiasm is still infectious.

In *Music and Its Lovers* by Vernon Lee (Allen and Unwin, 18s.) we have an investigation of the listener's reaction to music which resembles in many ways Mr. I. G. Richards' experiments on the reading of poetry. It seems that a definite attack on the journalistic attitude is developing. We are told by the popular dailies that " It's all a matter of taste " and the notion of authoritative opinion is steadily ridiculed so that those whose tastes most near correspond to the standards of the untrained become the popular pundits. Experiments like those of Dr. Lee will do much to clear the air of such pernicious humbug. Dr. Lee sent an elaborate questionnaire to 150 correspondents asking them :

> " Does music (always without words or suggestive title) (*a*) put you into emotional conditions or mood different from the one you happen to be in ? Does it seem to have a meaning, a message, something beyond itself, or does it seem to remain ' just music ' ? Does the hearing of music disturb ? "

And again :

> " After hearing music, do you ever, or often, find that you have been thinking of other things ? "

To compare our own answers to these questions with those of other people is valuable discipline. It may show us the arbitrary limits of our own appreciation and it may suggest ways in which our appreciation can be increased. But there is a vast field for the psychologist to investigate before we can say much that is useful about the contrast between the person who indulges in the enervating hot-bath emotionalism of romantic poets and musicians (Shelley, Wagner, Chopin, Tennyson) and the aseptic, faintly sadistic, activities of the classical or intellectual artist (Bach, Pope, Eliot). Dr. Lee suggests innumerable problems, she produces final answers to very few of them, but her book is one which will be of very great help to anyone interested in the problems of criticism. In particular it may be commended to all those who presume to teach the appreciation of poetry or music, for it will help the reader to view his own enthusiasms with an enlightening, and disconcerting, detachment.

THE POETS' FELLOWSHIP:

THE PREMIUM EDITOR'S REPORT.

The standard set on the last occasion has been well maintained, and it is with reluctance that several contributors have been excluded from the awards. Of these M. E. Milnes-Waller, John Roe and Arthur Smith must be specially mentioned.

The awards are as follows :—

1 : K. V. Chevis for the two lyrics " Actuality " and " The Dreamers." Both these poems have the intensity characteristic of genuine poetry, together with beauty of expression.

2 : In a very different style, Frances Wierman has done remarkable work in " Eternal Taboo." This is a long poem, finely sustained, and giving evidence of a great command over language. There is both thought and imagination here. Although making use of what one may call the " long, loose line " throughout, the authoress never loses control of the rhythm, and overcomes the main difficulty of this style of verse.

3 : Lucy Munson Taylor in " Challenge " has justified the title of the poem, and written some lovely lines.

4 : Phyllis M. Lubbock in " To-night, Again the Moon " shows originality, sensitiveness and imaginative power.

5 : Alice E. Collinge in " The Cremation " has written a very moving poem.

6 : N. K. Cruickshank for the lyric " This by Comparison."

Highly Commended.

E. F. Alden, Haddenham ;
L. Barrett, Bishops Stortford ;
B. T. Briggs, Edinburgh ;
Barnett D. Conlan, Lewes ;
M. R. Cossins, Richmond, Surrey ;
Eva Dobell, Brockworth, Glos.;
Ken Ethridge, Cardiff ;
Moira F. Figgis, London, W.C.;
C. L. Henderson, Montreal ;
M. A. Holben, Edmonton, N.;
R. McKie, Brighton ;
I. D. Mills, Whetstone, N.;
K. Phelps, London, W.;
T. Pittaway, Frome ;
Nancy Pollok, Lanark ;
S. W. Powell, Salisbury ;
John Roe, Plymouth ;
Arthur Smith, Wanstead, E.;
E. B. C. Thornett, London, W.;
Edith M. Walker, Bournemouth ;
M. E. Milnes-Walker, Madeira ;
B. Y. Williams, Cincinnati.

Commended.

J. W. Anderson, Skegness ;
L. J. Balman, Manchester ;
M. Carpenter, Caterham ;
Irene Doxford, Bickley ;
E. M. Fison, Felixstowe ;
V. M. Flower, Salisbury ;
I. S. Groom, Bristol ;
T. E. Casson, Newton le Willows ;
Mary Crozier, Manchester ;
P. Hesketh, Bolton ;
E. J. Howarth, Abertillery ;
M. W. Jones, Cardiff ;
Bertha Starr Jefferies, Bristol ;

Doris Major, Hendon, N.W.;
G. M. Marriage, Normandy, Surrey;
E. O. Measor, London, S.W.;
Iërne Ormsby, Sheffield;
John Purdie, Paisley;
Merwyth Rees, Pembroke Docks;
G. M. Starkey, Folkestone;
Zuella Sterling, New Hampshire, U.S.A.;
F. W. Thomas, Bath;
M. K. Toovey, Amersham;
J. Urquhart, London, S.W.;
M. Y. Watson, Seaham Harbour;
A. D. L. Wilson, Bedford;
Elise Fellowes White, Mass..

The Hon. Eleanour Norton very kindly provides us with three guineas for a poem or poems on A Poet or Any Poet—either individual or general or anonymous, but the former preferred. Competitors should not submit more than two poems and no poem should exceed forty lines. MSS. addressed "The Norton Premium," THE POETRY REVIEW, must reach us not later than April 5th.

The usual premium of £2 for the best poem or poems submitted to the Premium Editor during the month (without limitation of subject) is continued. Not more than four lyrics or one long poem should be submitted. MSS. should be addressed to "The Premium Editor, THE POETRY REVIEW Office, 36 Russell Square, London, W.C.1, before April 1st, accompanied by stamped addressed envelope, and if criticism is desired, 2s. 6d. (For a more detailed postal criticism, 5s. should be sent.) Contributors in all cases must observe the elementary rule that name and address of writer must appear on each MS.

The Hon. Eleanour Norton invites the Poets' Fellowship to a Tea and Talk Meeting at King Charles' Hunting Box on March 18th at 3.30 p.m. Mrs. Goodman hopes to arrange for a similar meeting in the Temple in April, probably April 29th. Verse-writing members of The Poetry Society who wish to attend these meetings must notify their intention in advance of each event. Tickets, 1s. 6d. each; guest tickets may be obtained at the same rate. The subject of the March discussion will be the peculiar and significant use of words by Keats and Shelley.

Mrs. P. R. Casey, of Longmont, Colorado, writes to the Premium Editor: "I wish to take this opportunity to express my deep appreciation of THE POETRY REVIEW, and of the wonderful outlook it presents through its offerings; it is indeed an inspiration to be privileged to be a reader and subscriber. Especially do I feel this, when I am tempted to send any effort of my own; yet I have learned that, like many experiences in life, we need much courage to expose our humble efforts to the light of criticism."

THE GOLD MEDAL FOR VERSE-SPEAKING

Awards by Mr. Ernest Milton

Mr. Ernest Milton, in awarding the Gold Medal of The Poetry Society at a recital of poetry by holders of the Society's Adult Silver Medal for Verse-Speaking, on December 9th, 1932, said :

" I was greatly flattered to be asked to make these awards for The Poetry Society to-day, not only because of the distinguished aims and reputation of the Society itself, but because the speaking of verse is very dear to me, and it is an extraordinary pleasure and privilege to be allowed to hear so much admirable speaking as I heard to-day. I think it speaks not only tremendously well for the individual efforts, all of which have been of good quality, but also for a Society which has been able to foster and promulgate such high standards of Verse-Speaking. One can only hope that such evidence as one has heard to-day means not only a very natural and human desire to achieve public recognition in the shape both of an auditorial and a definite reward, but it also means a genuine love of poetry. Really the winning of a prize, for such it simmers down to, is a triumph that is instinctive in all of us. It is the carrying on into maturity of a rather juvenile impulse, and I think it is a very nice thing that we don't lose that impulse—but that in itself is not important. Those who receive a medal to-day naturally will be pleased that their efforts have been crowned with that kind of success, and what they have done entitles them to such public recognition, but what I hope they really feel is that the actual winning of the medal itself is really the burgeoning into flower of a real passion for a beautiful art.

" It has been very difficult for me to make my selection. There was no speaking that I would have called mediocre. There was nothing that did not have some distinct quality of its own. I have heard no speaker to-day who is not entitled to display their gift and their study and the result of its application in the presence of other people, and that is saying a great deal when we hear so many misapplied amateur efforts in public speaking whether in verse or prose or theatrical. One thing struck me as curious—the aims of the Society had been made known to me and it was necessary for me to fasten on the idea of the speaking of abstract poetry as such, that is that the major aim of the Society in speaking verse is not the dramatization of verse in the manner of the stage, but the ability of the speaker to yield himself to the tide of the poet—to float out on the waters of poetry and yield to the rhythm, an instinctive 'letting go' on the ocean of poesy—therefore it was very curious to me to find Browning so often selected, because Browning really stands midway between abstract and dramatic poetry. He has not the dramatic power of a great genius of the theatre like Shakespeare : there is in Browning a very curious admixture,—and he has not the purely lyric poetry of Shelley. He is not essentially a poet's poet, and I could understand a candidate selecting Browning if he wanted to have an audition at the Old Vic or some repertory theatre, and was tired of doing Shakespeare, feeling it was no use his doing Shakespeare, it having been done by professional actors and the contrast being too invidious. One feels how am I to base my judgment according to the standards of The Poetry Society? If Browning is spoken with true dramatic effect the object of the Society is defeated, because it becomes theatrical. If, on the other hand, the speaker attempted the poem yet did it in the abstract method I knew it was no longer Browning and I was bound to be prejudiced against the rendition. Fortunately one or two of the speakers found the happy medium by which a certain balance of dramatic manner was observed as well as the abstract quality.

" I find there is a tendency here and there in the speaking to bring a word over into the next line in order to make sense. That, I think, is a deplorable habit. I don't think it has at any time disqualified any of the speakers this afternoon because I just wiped it off the slate as a prejudice of mine and did not allow it to count against any speaker, but let me advise anyone wanting to become a truly effective speaker of poetry, that the sacrificing of rhythm to the continuity of thought is a very grave mistake.

" Where I have found a great deal of good taste, a great deal of feeling, a great deal of reticence, and once or twice the gates of dreams have been opened for a moment, I cannot say that to-day I have heard anyone speak with what I call consistent identification with the material in hand. I have found distinguished quality, but I have not found supreme inspiration, but that is asking for very great qualities. I have found, however, qualities of such crying distinction that they cannot be allowed to go without public recognition. I have found qualities which, with the proper encouragement should lead to fine things. There is no one that I have not had to think over very seriously and whose work I have not to some extent admired. It has been very difficult for me to make my selections.

" The awards are as follows :

" Miss JOAN AUSTIN-HOLMES (London) : I was particularly impressed with a very fine optimism—a spiritual optimism which seemed to pervade the ' Epilogue,' and a very admirable and beautiful balanced narrative sense in the ' Crowning of Dreaming John.'

My next selection is MISS MAY CATTELL (Wolverhampton). There was here a really abstract dramatic quality, a real yielding to the poet and a fine sense of balance. What particularly impressed me, and I will always remember it, was the exquisite modulation of the word ' now.' It was never allowed to degenerate into a series of tricks. There is a type of person who performs a poem like that, who would have turned hand-springs with that word ' now.' This candidate did not do so ; there was always a lovely bell-like quality on the word and an occasional subtle differentiation of it that gave the sense of a kind of fatality.

" In the case of MR. ROBERT WALTER (London), I had a long struggle with myself for the simple reason that being the only male candidate I felt I was prejudiced in his favour. I subjected him to every possible disadvantage I could, but in the long run I found that he has one of those voices which has only to open its mouth and it is poetical, added to which Mr. Walter has a great, real sense of poetry.

"In the case of MISS DAISY ROGER (Ceylon), I was tremendously impressed with an extraordinary and rather intoxicating sense of rhythm. There did not seem to be any meaning in it particularly, but it had an inspirational quality. She has an extraordinary feeling for verse, even with the handicaps from my point of view, of a slight exoticism of pronunciation and a slight strangeness of tone, and it seemed that here was the stuff of which real poetry-speaking is made. There is a very curious atmospheric quality which appealed to me very much. I think that with very careful watching and very careful judgment in the selection of work, she should go very far indeed.

"My last choice is MISS AUDREY RUSSELL (London). What I liked enormously about Miss Russell's delivery was its very beautiful English quality; it is one of the most essentially English voices that I have heard in a very long time. I closed my eyes once or twice and I felt this is the very stuff of England and if I should hear Miss Russell on the stage anywhere I should think 'This is English verse speaking,' and on these grounds I could not resist the appeal particularly of Miss Russell's Rupert Brooke sonnets."

MR. ALFRED NOYES ON THE READING OF POETRY

MR. ALFRED NOYES, in awarding the RAWNSLEY MEMORIAL GOLD MEDAL for the Reading of Poetry on Saturday, January 28th, said:

"One of the chief difficulties in making a decision in competitions of this sort is the difference in quality of the poems chosen. One may pick out half a dozen competitors who are better than any of the others, but if one of this half-dozen has chosen a poem infinitely superior to any of the others it is difficult to decide how much of the beauty of the rendering is due to the poem and how much to the renderer. There are, of course, fine shades of difference between the competitors that are very difficult to measure.

"One thing stands out clearly in these competitions: the better the poem, the greater the chance of beauty in the rendering. Fortunately we were able to hear each of the outstanding competitors in one reading of the same poem.

"One thing I think The Poetry Society has been doing with great effect and in doing it has been rendering a great service to the cause of poetry for many years now. It has helped people to realize that poetry was meant to be heard. Poetry, as you know, has been regarded all through the ages by the poets themselves as a musical affair. Lyrical poetry especially has always been regarded as a kind of song and the musical effects that you get in poetry do really convey the essence of poetry. When you get a poem like the 'Choric Song' from the *Lotus Eaters*, for instance, the depths of the meaning are really conveyed by the music, not by the superficial syntax of the words. That is why the reader of poetry should not emphasize points in the superficial syntax but should try to get those undertones of music. By a very happy chance a short time ago I was able to hear Tennyson's voice on an old gramophone record, giving a rendering of some of his most famous poems. In that record you could recognize the character of the man and even the slight Lincolnshire accent, and he confirmed what I have always held, that poetry should be delivered in an even, but not monotonous, flow, and in such a way that the metre and rhythm conveyed the meaning. In the case of the ordinary reader, very often a false antithesis is given by strongly emphasizing words, or trying to give dramatic interest by emphasizing and stressing words within the lines which destroy the effect of the rhythm and metre, and make the poet say what he did not intend to say. The good poet always gives his meaning in the rhythm and metre of the poem: you don't have to take the poem apart to get at the real sense; the real sense is conveyed in the metrical effects, which in a good poem are not monotonous. I feel sure that The Poetry Society, in teaching people that, is rendering a great service to poetry.

"One of the great difficulties in getting people to appreciate poetry at the present day is that so few people understand that there is a real technique about the reading. You might almost as well try to get people to appreciate music without their understanding the technique of it. It simply cannot be done. I have never yet heard an English actor on any stage, except Sir Johnston Forbes-Robertson, deliver verse as any poet would really want it read. I have read in the newspapers of Mr. So-and-so's 'magnificent' rendering, but, with that one exception, never yet have I heard anything which did not make me want to put my fingers in both my ears. There is no actor of to-day who could read those opening lines of Tennyson's 'Choric Song'—rendering the music perfectly, finely, but not monotonously, and expressing all the range and variety of the poet's thought. The actor at once would take to rolling his eyes towards the heavens, dramatizing it verse by verse, and trying to act a song; he would introduce all the absurdities of opera into what should be a lyric symphony.

"You must have noticed once or twice in the course of this afternoon when you got verse that departed from the real functions of literature, how terribly difficult it was for the person who was trying to deliver it to get any real effect. The artist was trying to do something out of the sphere of her art. I refer in particular to the poem by Gerard Manley Hopkins. That poet is trying to say in a series of incoherent exclamations exactly what Shakespeare gives you with the utmost simplicity in 'O Mistress Mine, where are you roaming?' The symbolism of Shakespeare's 'journey's end' is all that one needs.

"The great effects of poetry are produced by lucidity, simplicity—the laying hold of a higher order, rather than attempting to break away from convention by throwing your mind into disorder. There is such a thing as false convention in fingering, but you don't get away from it by trying to play the piano with chop-sticks, which is exactly what Hopkins does, technically and intellectually. You must lay hold upon a higher order and a more beautiful simplicity and lucidity. Whatever school you belong to—this is true all through the ages. You get it in the great Greeks, in the Bible, in Wordsworth, and one line of that simplicity is worth far more than the false originality obtained by pretending to go off your head."

Mr. Noyes awarded the Rawnsley Memorial Gold Medal to MISS KATREEN LACK, saying the "Ode on the Intimations of Immortality" was beautifully given, rendered as the poet himself would have it done. The poem ran with true feeling and with no attempt to overstress or over-emphasize the words and verses. The silver replica was awarded to Miss Rita Milner, and the bronze replica to Jane Donn-Byrne, for her fine, spirited, convincing rendering of two poems by Blake.

THE LADY MARGARET GOLD MEDAL for Verse-speaking was also awarded to MISS KATREEN LACK, whose rendering of "La Belle Dame" was wonderfully done. Mr. Noyes continued: "I had to bracket Miss Rita Milner and Miss Doris Mackie second; the latter did Stephen Phillips' 'Lancelot and Guinevere' in a way which brought out the great qualities of Stephen Phillips' work. It is an illustration of how utterly stupid modern literary fashions are;—there was a man who had more poetry in his little finger than most people have in their whole body, yet one must not mention his name. It is as mysterious as the weather—in fact, far more mysterious. There seems no reason at all in modern literary fashions. One can usually predict what the weather is going to be one or even two days ahead, but half a dozen energetic people can start a literary fashion, if they are interested enough, in a week in London, and 'Lancelot and Guinevere' proves to us what beauty has been put on the shelf by them.

"I am quite sure that if The Poetry Society goes on with its work it will, in the long run, be doing a great service to what is one of the greatest of English traditions. This country has the greatest poetry in the world and it would be a tragic thing if this poetry had to drag itself along with a broken wing because there were not enough people in England who understood how it should be read."

* * *

MR. ALFRED NOYES very kindly undertakes to preserve the continuity of The Poetry Society's Verse-Speaking and Reading policy by acting as Examiner for the Gold Medal for Verse-Speaking on April 1st. Candidates must send in their entries together with copies of the words of two *a* and *b* pieces respectively not later than March 18th. No late entries can be accepted on this occasion.

MYSELF.

I AM the gamble of all time, the guess
Of centuries which never may come right.
Between a loveliness and loveliness
I am the blind man's sight.

I am a sudden accidental cry,
A mournful debt, a melancholy chance.
Between a wisdom and a wisdom, I
Am doleful ignorance.

I am a speck of dust that lies asleep
Along eternity in utter dark ;
Perpetually between a deep and deep
The bleeding question-mark.

H. CHATTOPADHYAYA.

THE PROVENANCE OF POESY

OF Poesy I made bold to inquire
Whence came her pulsings, sure and infinite,
Her sweet, elusive moods, her sacred fire,
Her wiles invitatory that excite
To speechless rapture ; her creative power,
Her broad demesne, from soul to star and flower ;
I dared to ask what was her provenance,
If queenlihood by high design, or chance.

She answered me : I am innascible,
One spirit with the nameless Uncreate :
The rhythms of life, of sea, of heaven, of hell,
And all their portents, from me emanate.
To him I love I come with gladdening feet,
Plenipotent, his bride, his paraclete.

EDWARD CONN.

A new quarterly periodical, the *Public Speaker and Debater*, indicates that self-expression by means of the voice has become recognized as a very important matter with many ramifications and applications. The first number illustrates this wide range and contains an important suggestion for professional co-operation among teachers of elocution, voice-producers and speech trainers whose work should no longer be considered merely an adjunct to music-teaching.

SHELLEY'S BIRTHDAY

(*Scene :* Field Place, Sussex, England. *Time :* August 4, 1792)

I

IN an upper room, her travail past and done,
Your mother lies, and you, her new-born son,
Beside her, sleeping. Exhaustion's quietude
Descends upon her, meek weariness, a mood
Of leaden languor that will not even glance
At you, her first-born, sunk in dreamless trance
And subject still to your pre-natal world
With tender limbs relaxed and hands rose-curled.

Meanwhile, below, what do they think or say,
Those genteel kin of yours, of the self-same clay :
Aunts gliding about in crinolines and laces,
Uncles in wigs and waistcoats, with copper-red faces,
And that preposterous father of yours who stands
With his back to the hearth, happy in cattle and lands
And preening himself on the fortunate birth of an heir ?—
Of what strange sprite he has sired is *he* aware ?

(*Lightning sheathed in a rain-drop,*
Storm-winds cased in a rose,
A lark's wing shaking the heavens,
Earthquake still as repose—
Who knows, who knows,
Of all this darkling crew,
The impermissible power lodged in you,
A helpless baby lying,
And in your soft complying
Who shall espy
The yet unhinted mystery,
The plumbless depths, the veilèd wonder ?
And your first cry—
What if you had spoken in thunder !)

The clock in the corner strikes with commonplace doom,
The sun glints into the long, oak-panelled room,
The nine thin glasses on the table set
Sparkle with filling, and all hands well-met
Rise to the toast " To the son ! " which the vicar gives.

Your tough old grandsire to show that his wit still lives
Cracks a scurrilous jest ; the ladies smile
Or frown or titter, each to her taste and style,
Or move apart to the long window-seat
And gazing abroad from that diamond-paned retreat
See England in her fairest mood complete :

Hedgerows and parkland and the sloping hill
And secret copse that must be lyric still
With thrush and cuckoo, or, if silent ever,
It is but prelude to the lark's endeavour,
    (*Another sound, another voice shall wake*
    Than now sits brooding in this dewy brake—
    A wingèd voice quivering up to the sky
    And trailing behind a mist-like melody !)
The rolling meadow with its speckled cows,
The golden sun-light filtering through the boughs
Of wide-spread oaks and dappling the smooth green
Stretching beneath—
            (*high in the pure serene*
    One cloud floats idly on the skiey main,
    Bearer of thunder and dark, driving rain,
    Now masterless and free and bright and fair !)
The glittering noon-tide haze, the slumbrous air
Warm with a thousand scents and fragrancies,
The drowsing cattle and the droning bees,
And hardly an oak-leaf fluttered by the breeze !
    (*Oh, there's a breath, thou breath of Autumn's being,*
    Shall come with music and all pure delight ;
    And there's a wind, not thou, beyond all fleeing,
    Shall scale time's summit and life's freezing height.
    And though, wild wind, thou send the oak-leaves flying
    And shake the sky and blind the burning sun,
    Oh, there shall be, than thine, a louder crying
    And there shall move, than thou, a more impetuous one !)

So lies the scene—clouds, cattle, streams and grass,
Manor and trees, tranquil as in a glass,
The immemorial calm, the blessed boon

Of rural peace in a summer afternoon,
Till all the West with myriad colours run,
The golden largess of the spendthrift sun,
Whose slant rays seek the zenith, shedding wide
Its tender hues over a countryside
Of human hopes and fears. No hidden vale
Or swelling down but tells the self-same tale
Of man's mysterious presence, as aloft
Rises on imperceptible wings the soft,
Warm drift of smoke. The breath of hearth and hearth
Mingles with the evening breath of the moist earth.
(*Each in his separate cell,*
Each in his separate hell—
What cell may you confine,
My swift and beautiful one!
What hell-fire you refine,
Own kinsman of the sun!
You of the stag-blue eyes,
You of the golden hair,
Untrammelled as the skies,
Stainless as air!)

So lies the scene, and so the day wears out
In dusk and darkness, till the starry rout
Takes the wide heavens. . . .
Night on the huddled hills
And a gleaming moon that fills
This valley with silver silence to the brim—
How do these yet declare
All that men dream and hope of good and fair,
Though far away, though far away and dim.
(*One, too, O moon like you,*
Bringing life's vital dew
In love's beneficence
To all mankind, in patient innocence,
Wandering companionless
And pale, like you, for weariness,
One too like you,
Gentle and mild and true,

In candid purity
Across our mortal sky—
Darkened with clouds of mortal hate, alas—
One too like you, O moon,
Shall pass
Too soon, too soon.)

II

A sleeping-child, you lie beside your mother
In night's blank session, under the paling moon,
Under the dimming stars. Oh, once there shone
A Star brighter than any now in the heavens
Over another Babe. Did it foretell
Th' appointed doom or hint a bloody answer
Or set the path of all-embracing love
To some still permanent joy? And what do these,
Whose lights now show, prefigure? Pain, pain ever,
And their far glow seems but the faint refulgence
Of lives, once fair, extinguished—the pure, the holy,
The beautiful, the first of humankind,
Whose common tale repeats this burden only:

A loving spirit in a world at quarrel
Is that world's natural victim. He is made
For scorns and buffets, hate that will not die
Save with the temporal death of the too noble,
Who for love's fault must bear a thousand woes.
For this shall he starve amid superfluous plenty
And water his crust with tears; he shall have loss
And suffering merely, pangs, stripes, the scourge,
Exile and want, the dagger in the dark,
The poisoned cup, the headsman's axe, the stake—
The varied instruments of wrath and blood,
So shrewdly found, pat to the angry purpose.
Not all earth's waters, rivers, lakes, and seas,
Nor vastest ocean nor heaven's cleansing flood
May utterly wash out th' offence of him
Who loves too well his kind, loves without measure.
For love of man too difficult is for men,
Too stark, too stern, too pitiful, too tender,

Too bold in act, too wide of scope, too careless
Of settled bounds, knowing no proper limits,
No castes, no creeds, no walls, and barriers none
To its free ministration—it burns, burns,
Not in desired possession but for acceptance;
And how may men who would draw easy breath
And temper the generous surges of the blood
Take the disturbing bounty or sustain
The intimate heat of this intensest fire?

And there are dreams, alas, strange dreams that trouble
The loving heart and shake the housing bosom,
Since dreams are still the progeny of love,
And if man dream, he bleeds; it is so written:
Vision is agony and bloody sweat
Known in the midst of love's own solitude,
And all the records of man's venturous past
But ring the changes on this central sorrow,
That, pour he forth his spirit as he may,
Ply nature's secrets, burn with youthful zest,
Sing his brief songs, and hold the point of danger,
Ay, hunger and thirst for holy justice' sake,
Never on earth shall he know rest or find
For his unquiet heart a peace that quiets.
Not this rank, sweating globe may be his sanction;
Nor ought that thereon is, being but mortal,
May ease his clamorous breast, nor his two arms
Clasp more than their own substance, ashes and dust.
Immortal hunger craves immortal food
And infinite longing ends its passionate quest
In the Infinite only.
Wherefore, gentle stars,
Though like an exhalation you diffuse
Beauty and peace around this infant couch,
Something beyond there is that he must seek,
Seeing you are but symbols of a beauty,
A peace, a joy, a fair, rewarding glory
Beyond the heart's conceiving. And you, O child,
Pure spring of song, frail seedling of delight,

New-budded rose, whose opening shall release
The paradisal odour of fresh love
Solacing earth and all the tribes of men,
Though like the moon your ways be ways of peace,
Though like the cloud you wander masterless,
Though like the lark your song mount to the heavens,
Though your love's passion be as deep, as wide
As the strange, unrestful sea, touching all shores,
Yet shall your feet be rooted fast to earth
Like all men's, and your mouth inherit the draught
Of simple bitterness that all men drink,
And your soul feel, keener than most, the pang
Of glimpsed and vanished Beauty, so you loathe
This flesh that faints beneath the goad of thought
Busy forever with man's destiny.

But yet, though these and a myriad woes beside
That feed upon the heart given to dream
Shall be your portion, oh, 'tis a rich doom,
A dower of pain immortally reserved
For man's great lovers. Not the human ache
Open to sensual grief and loud bewailing,
Nor that strange sadness which like a monstrous mist
Drowning the day comes unsolicited
At whiles to the spirit and, too vague for tears,
Yet seems to hold the sorrow of the world
And broken memories of a fathomless past,
Not these alone shall find you and possess you,
But that most keen and unrelenting pain
At the heart's core which, call it hidden loss,
Dark ecstasy, or prayer, or loneliness,
Is yet sufficient answer to man's question,
Making the mortal deathless. Not here may man
Set up his lasting dwelling, and if not here,
Then he shall find it elsewhere : this is the rock
Which groping thought may build on and the pledge
That something still beyond our clotted seeing
Endures and waits, unchanged and knowing not time.

JOHN BUNKER.

VERSE AS A REVELATION OF PERSONALITY

WE have recently, as part of our College work in the Osmania University, done some concentration on a passage by Andrew Bradley in which he discusses the two main fallacies regarding poetry, the fallacies which respectively make form and substance the main things in any poem. It is not so clear in the earlier part as it should be, but it improves as it goes on, and it ends by leaving in our minds two great conclusions. The first is that poetry, like the other arts, like religion and philosophy, is always striving to express something it dimly divines but can only suggest. The second is that poetry is a spirit, coming we know not whence, speaking its own language and at its own bidding, and our master rather than our servant.

In the course of the passage there come some wise words about the futility of paraphrasing poetry. The heresy that poetry is only poetical substance plus a negligible form encourages us in the habit so dear to us of putting our own thoughts or fancies into the place of the poet's creation. What he meant by *Hamlet* or the *Ode to a Nightingale* or *Abt Vogler*, we say, is this or that which we know already ; and so we lose what he had to tell us. But he meant what he said and he said what he meant.

Lovers of music in India are very familiar with the appreciation of certain musical forms and modes of melody to express different states of the soul. This sort of thing is not dealt with so much in our study of English poetry, though we have general ideas about the subjective meaning of the wider forms into which we divide poetry. If a poet chooses a Shakespearean lyric form, or a sonnet or blank verse in which to express himself, we are prepared beforehand for a certain peculiar tone which attaches to those forms, strongly emotional, meditative and logical, or larger in utterance as the case may be. And we learn to distinguish by tone or structure varieties of each of these broadly inclusive forms.

But what is a much more difficult matter is to distinguish the different subjective notes of different authors when they are using the same formal medium. Bradley, as many other critics, rightly makes much of the needs for the perfect fusion of matter and form. Such perfect union of the two essentials is difficult to show by analysis; it is generally instinctively that it is recognized. But we all of us do feel the need of it when we come across what we affirm to be poetry that has not succeeded in doing what it set out to do. The greater part of imperfect poetry is poetry in which the form and the matter do not suit each other or have not been made one. For Walter Pater successful fusion was what gave perfection to a poem. " Lyrical poetry, precisely because in it we are least able to detach the matter from the form, without a deduction of something from that matter itself, is, at least artistically, the highest and most complete form of poetry."

A good critic is one who is able to distinguish and reveal to others individual tone of the poet whose work he is discussing; who can feel, for example, that " Shelley everywhere implies, more by the sheer form and tone of his verses than by their rational meaning, that existence is an unconditional unity which has invented infinite modes of phantasmal and illusory duality for the purpose of becoming conscious of itself."

This is a difficult saying, even as difficult as the hardest of Shelley's verse; it is a judgment which is the result not only of reading Shelley but of reading him in the light of philosophical thought which has appeared, at any rate in English, since Shelley's day. But in all our study of a writer we have to tune ourselves to other points of view; we cannot judge anything fairly without comparison, nor without the stimulus of far greater minds than our own.

It is an astonishing thing how in all good poetry the tone of the poet's temperament is taken by the words, words that are free to all alike. That is because for him writing has become as natural a process even as gesture. Using words he cannot help revealing himself, and in the structure of his poetry there will inevitably appear all those qualities and tendencies which are a part of moral character. And there will be shown certain preferences in form, with which will be associated what is called tempo or time, in the sense of rate or style of musical movement. Time cannot be indicated in the way by which form is made clear, but it can be felt during recitation, and the best way is to read a poem in what you feel to be a natural voice and at a natural speed, then reduce that speech for successive readings, until you feel that you have discovered the fitting speed. By so doing you will become more clearly conscious of the form, and will be able to come to a judgment as the fusion of the elements of the poem.

The highest form of verse for which there are definite injunctions laid down about the form and the disposition of the thought according to that form, is the sonnet, and a study of the sonnet from those of Shakespeare to those of John Masefield is a revelation of personality through a succession of varied prisms.

Blank verse is, of course, a much freer medium than the sonnet, being a kind of musical prose, constructed in paragraphs running across the formal verse structure ; and it allows of much wider revelation of the self than the sonnet, for there are qualities which cannot even be formally suggested in the narrow ground of the sonnet or in stanza forms—the broader, continuous phases of character.

" Blank verse," says Prof. Gilbert Murray, " having very little metrical ornament, has to rely for its effect on rich and elaborate language." To which it can be replied that some of the blank verse which moves English people most deeply to-day has not only very little metrical ornament but very little rich language, for example, the blank verse of Wordsworth.

The blank verse of elaborate diction is found in the earlier stages.

I

O, when degree is shaked,
Which is the ladder to all high designs,
The enterprise is sick. How could communities,
Degrees in schools, and brotherhoods in cities,
Peaceful commerce from dividable shores,
The primogeniture and due of birth,

Prerogative of age, crowns, sceptres, laurels,
But by degrees, stand in authentic place ?

II

Egyptians, dare you think your pyramids,
Built to outdure the sun, as you suppose
Where your unworthy kings lie raked in ashes,
Are monuments fit for him ? No, brood of Nilus,
Nothing can cover his high fame but heaven,
No pyramids set off his memories
But the eternal substance of his greatness,
To which I leave him.

III

On smooth the seal
And bended dolphins play ; part huge or bulk
Wallowing unwieldy, enormous in their gait,
Tempest the ocean ; there leviathan
Hugest of living creatures, on the deep
Stretches like a promontory, sleeps or swims,
And seems a moving land, and at his gills
Draws in, and at his trunk spouts out a sea.

If these three passages are carefully studied they cannot fail to disclose to us, not complete personalities, but tendencies of mind or heart, and aspiration to heights of conception for which their authors make bold to attempt the ideal expression. In the first we have the poet earnestly convinced, like Ruskin, of the importance of degree or rank or caste, if you will, and employing the rich power of his mind to make this conviction as impressive as possible. In the second, much nearer human speech, we feel the beating of a generous heart before a beaten foe ; words put into the mouth of Caesar are the words of English chivalry at its zenith. In the last we have a mind loving solitude and the remotest of regions willing to go back in imagination to primeval days as he conceived them and compelling his own speech to reverberate with echoes of such large and lonely scenes.

And in these passages, in their building up as well as their thought, we have true self-revelation of the minds of Shakespeare, Fletcher and Milton.

They further illustrate the important truth that form is the result of energy and not of repose.

For me the classical example of later verse that reveals personality is Wordsworth's *Prelude*, by the reading of which one may come very close to the poet as a natural man and as a lover of books.

> I would stand,
> If the night blackened with a coming storm,
> Beneath some rock, listening to notes that are
> The ghostly language of the ancient earth,
> Or make their dim abode in distant winds.

How clearly the personality behind these lines stands forth in contrast, say, with the following blank verse by Browning, which might almost, by the way, be a description of one view of Hyderabad, the little-known city of Southern India, where these lines are being written :

> Over the waters in the vaporous west
> The sun goes down, as in a sphere of gold,
> Behind the outstretched city, which between,
> With all that length of domes and minarets
> Athwart the splendour, black and crested runs
> Like a Turk verse along a scimitar.

What you will find in the greatest passages of the *Prelude* is not rich and elaborate language, but simple words invested with noble dignity, with the truest kind of romance and with an unforgettable cadence. That is personality, suffusing the medium ; it is the poet's higher self made manifest in the only way possible to him, which is the last victory of poetry.

E. E. SPEIGHT.

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FORMULA

HERE is my Body,
And here is Time ;
Here is my Soul, that dares to climb
Free from the work-shop's din and grime
Into a stratosphere sublime.
Here is Fancy, and here is Thought,
And here, long sought,
With heart's blood bought,
Here—here is Rhyme !

ELISE FELLOWES WHITE.

CLOSING CARNEGIE'S LIFE OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN

who endured,
that government of the people, by the people, for the people should not perish from the earth.

O LINCOLN, man of sorrows, long enough
We have vaunted Shakespeare over every name,
Preening us for the breed from whence he came
Who has furnished forth the world out of his thought;
What to thy long, deep agony has been brought
Of all that earth owes thee, and all our race?
If on this globe we had left no other trace,
We whom thy soul transcendently outsprung,
Cedar of the New World, above our tongue,
Above our boasted parliaments greater far . . .
Crucified arms above your civil war
You stretched, in that fierce hell a very Christ,
Strong because your pierced soul with His kept tryst,
But agonized, bleeding drop by drop away,
Too keenly pitiful for the power you sway;
Nobler this stock has never bred, nor wept a sadder day.

Eaten away by life, that mighty heart,
Dead while you lived, that mask with anguished eyes,
Except that none who so can suffer dies,
I claim you, Abraham Lincoln, for our part;
But scarce for Saxon England, though your name
Endows one English shire with lasting fame.
No, in that glorious heart and brain there ran
Fibres more delicate than our common man,
Esquire or citizen, can show ingrain:
An eye for misery, the seer's pain,
Eternal feud against injustice sworn,
Pledged from his birth and like a signet worn,
His soul a mother bird above its nestlings torn.

REDCLIFFE M'KIE.

The Annual Competition for the Poetry Society's Challenge Cup for the speaking and reading of poetry in foreign languages will be held in the autumn. Enquiries are invited.

For invitations to the Poetry Society's birthday luncheon in May write to the General Secretary.

SHAKESPEARE AS A MASTER PSYCHO-ANALYST

[In presenting the following study of Shakespeare as a master psycho-analyst our American Editor calls attention to the greater depth of self analysis in *King Richard II* than the famed lines from Hamlet's soliloquy; and points out that Christopher Marlowe and Shakespeare used the same poetic imagery.]

SHAKESPEARE was a master in psycho-analysis who wove his findings in skilfully evolved dramatic scenes. He made personalities and their feelings and characteristics unfold themselves so naturally that one is not aware of the psycho-analyst being at work.

As a master of individualistic psychology Shakespeare appears at his best in the historic plays. We can also judge his art best in historic plays because he deals with personalities and events. At this point the Shakespearean student will, agreeing, proceed to quote Hamlet's soliloquy. As it is one of Shakespeare's best known examples of self-expression that comes within the category of psycho-analysis, we may quote it first, but not as the best example. We would rather turn to Shakespeare's historic play, *King Richard II*.

Richard II ranks foremost as an example of Shakespeare's mastery in psycho-analysis.

Hamlet's soliloquy, as masterly as it appears at first, is eclipsed by what we may call the "Mirror Scene." It is the closing of Scene I, Act IV. King Richard II is abdicating in favour of his cousin, Bolingbroke, the future Henry IV. The event takes place at Westminster Hall, in the presence of the "Lords Spiritual," representing the Church, who stand on the right side of the throne, the "Lords Temporal," representing the nobility, who stand on the left, and the Commons, representing the people generally, who stand below.

Bolingbroke, who is to succeed as king, but fears that there may be questions as to his right to the throne, unless King Richard abdicates openly, asks him, and is answered thus:

BOLING. I thought you had been willing to resign.
K. RICH. My crown I am; but still my griefs are mine:

You may my glories and my state depose,
But not my griefs ; still am I king of those.
BOLING. Part of your cares you give me with your crown.
K. RICH. Your cares set up, do not pluck my cares down.
My care is, loss of care, by old care done ;
Your care is, gain of care, by new care won :
The cares I give, I have, though given away ;
They tend the crown, yet still with me they stay.

One finds the thought capable of interpolation in a hundred ways to deal with the simple facts of daily life. We might have expressed such thoughts, we feel. Shakespeare has supplied us a formula. We return to Bolingbroke, as he returns with the question to Richard II :

BOLING. Are you contented to resign the crown ?
K. RICH. Ay, no ;—no, ay ; for I must nothing be ;
Therefore no no, for I resign to thee.
Now mark me, how I will undo myself :—
I give this heavy weight from off my head,
And this unwieldy sceptre from my hand,
The pride of kingly sway from out my heart ;
With mine own tears I wash away my balm,
With mine own hands I give away my crown,
With mine own tongue deny my sacred state,
With mine own breath release all duty's rites :
All pomp and majesty I do forswear ;
My manors, rents, revenues I forego ;
My acts, decrees, and statutes I deny :
God pardon all oaths that are broke to me !
God keep all vows unbroke that swear to thee !
Make me, that nothing have, with nothing griev'd,
And thou with all pleas'd, that hast all achiev'd !
Long mayst thou live in Richard's seat to sit,
And soon lie Richard in an earthy pit !
God save King Henry, unking'd Richard says,
And send him many years of sunshine days !—
What more remains ?

Shakespeare made King Richard examine himself before the assembled Lords and Commons, at Westminster Hall, by having the 1st Earl of Northumberland hand to the King a list of confessions whereby the King was to remove all doubts on the part of the Lords and Commons of the justice of the charges made against him and of his unfitness to rule, thus :

NORTH (*offering a paper*). No more, but that you read

These accusations, and these grievous crimes
Committed by your person and your followers
Against the state and profit of this land;
That, by confessing them, the souls of men
May deem that you are worthily depos'd.
K. RICH. Must I do so? and must I ravel out
My weav'd-up follies? Gentle Northumberland,
If thy offences were upon record,
Would it not shame thee, in so fair a troop,
To read a lecture of them? If thou wouldst,
There shouldst thou find one heinous article—
Containing the deposing of a king—
And cracking the strong warrant of an oath—
Mark'd with a blot, doom'd in the book of Heaven:
Nay, all of you that stand and look upon me,
Whilst that my wretchedness doth bait myself—
Though some of you, with Pilate, wash your hands,
Showing an outward pity; yet you Pilates
Have here deliver'd me to my sour cross,
And water cannot wash away your sin.
NORTH. My lord, dispatch; read o'er these articles.
K. RICH. Mine eyes are full of tears, I cannot see:
And yet salt water blinds them not so much
But they can see a sort of traitors here.
Nay, if I turn mine eyes upon myself,
I find myself a traitor with the rest;
For I have given here my soul's consent
To undeck the pompous body of a king;
Made glory base, and sovereignty a slave,
Proud majesty a subject, state a peasant.

The Earl of Northumberland, who had suffered from King Richard's taking his lands, and was eager to complete the task of demoting him and having Bolingbroke crowned as Henry IV, presses him to read the articles of confession of his wrongs. The intrusion serves but to give a background of majesty as King Richard meets his request:

NORTH. My lord——
K. RICH. No lord of thine, thou haugh insulting man,
Nor any man's lord; I have no name, no title—
No, not that name was given me at the font—
But 'tis usurp'd:—alack the heavy day,
That I have worn so many winters out,
And know not now what name to call myself!
Oh, that I were a mockery king of snow,
Standing before the sun of Bolingbroke,

To melt myself away in water-drops !—
Good king—great king—(and yet not greatly good).

Shakespeare's power of psycho-analysis reaches a majestic climax at the end of the first scene of the fourth act of *Richard II*, the *Mirror Scene*. King Richard, having expressed his full gamut of emotions in response to the requests to abdicate made to him by the victorious Bolingbroke, and having checked the Earl of Northumberland's anxiety to have him confess his shortcomings before the Lords and Commons, turns to Bolingbroke. His request for a mirror and the use he proposed to make of it introduce the scene in which the King's words reflect his feelings as much as the mirror reflects his face, thus :

K. Rich. An' if my word be sterling yet in England,
Let it command a mirror hither straight,
That it may show me what a face I have,
Since it is bankrupt of his majesty.
Boling. Go some of you and fetch a looking-glass.
(*Exit an Attendant.*)
North. Read o'er this paper while the glass doth come.
K. Rich. Fiend, thou torment'st me ere I come to hell !
Boling. Urge it no more, my Lord Northumberland.
North. The Commons will not, then, be satisfied.
K. Rich. They shall be satisfied : I'll read enough,
When I do see the very book indeed
Where all my sins are writ, and that's—myself.
(*Re-enter Attendant, with a glass.*)
Give me the glass, and therein will I read.—
No deeper wrinkles yet ? Hath sorrow struck
So many blows upon this face of mine,
And made no deeper wounds ?—Oh, flattering glass !
Like to my followers in prosperity,
Thou dost beguile me. Was this face the face
That every day under his household roof
Did keep ten thousand men ? Was this the face
That, like the sun, did make beholders wink ?
Was this the face that fac'd so many follies,
And was at last out-fac'd by Bolingbroke ?
A brittle glory shineth in this face :
As brittle as the glory is the face ;
(*Dashes the glass against the ground.*)
For there it is, crack'd in a hundred shivers.—
Mark, silent king, the moral of this sport—
How soon my sorrow have destroy'd my face.

That shattered mirror expresses the shattered hopes, the lost kingdom, and the falling from him of all the things that were his when he ruled. That face "that every day under his household roof did keep ten thousand men" loses its power "to make beholders wink," after the shattering of the mirror. One expects his status to change, from king to something less. Shakespeare makes Bolingbroke introduce a contrast, then King Richard in the new status, asking a favour of his successor:

BOLING. The shadow of your sorrow hath destroy'd
  The shadow of your face.
K. RICH. Say that again.
  The shadow of my sorrow? ha! let's see:—
  'Tis very true, my grief lies all within;
  And these external manners of laments
  Are merely shadows to the unseen grief,
  That swells with silence in the tortur'd soul;
  There lies the substance: and I thank thee, King,
  For thy great bounty, that not only giv'st
  Me cause to wail, but teachest me the way
  How to lament the cause. I'll beg one boon
  And then be gone and trouble you no more.
  Shall I obtain it?
BOLING. Name it, fair cousin.
K. RICH. Fair cousin! I am greater than a king,
  For when I was a king, my flatterers
  Were then but subjects; being now a subject,
  I have a king here to my flatterer.
  Being so great, I have no need to beg.
BOLING. Yet ask.
K. RICH. And shall I have?
BOLING. You shall.
K. RICH. Then give me leave to go.
BOLING. Whither?
K. RICH. Whither you will, so I were from your sights.
BOLING. Go, some of you convey him to the Tower.
K. RICH. Oh, good! convey?—conveyers are you all,
  That rise thus nimbly by a true king's fall.
    (*Exeunt* KING RICHARD, *some Lords, and a Guard.*)

We do not feel that this is the same man. His kingly, haughty personality went with the crashed mirror. As he departs to the Tower we feel we ought to follow the personality that was "crack'd in a hundred shivers." King

Richard's repetition of "Was this the face——" is a masterly dramatic scene besides being profound psychoanalysis.

Shakespeare's contemporary, Christopher Marlowe, in his *Tragedy of Dr. Faustus*, charmed us with this romantic presentation:

> Was this the face that launched a thousand ships
> And burned the topless towers of Ilium ?—
> Sweet Helen make me immortal with a kiss !—
> Her lips suck forth my soul: see where it flees.
> Come, Helen, come, give me my soul again
> Here I will dwell, for heaven is in these lips,
> And all is dross that is not Helena.

Elsewhere Marlowe also leads us to Parnassian heights by these lines:

> And had she lived before the siege of Troy,
> Helen, whose beauty summoned Greece to arms,
> And drew a thousand ships to Tenedos,
> Had not been named in Homer's Iliad.

But this pleasant poetic imagery is eclipsed when we return to King Richard's "Mirror Scene." Marlowe is dramatically romantic. Shakespeare is dramatically psychologic. Marlowe accentuates a romance with a reference to the power of Helen's beautiful face. But there is little of psychologic value. He probably did not intend it to be psychologic in respect to the power of Helen's face.

Shakespeare's skill goes beyond even making King Richard express the state and processes of his mind and philosophizing, which are the basic expressions of psychology as a science. Using the realism of King Richard's life and woes, Shakespeare makes him disclose the processes of his mind and the subduing of his passions, ambitions and reactions, and makes history stand still and the new King and the Parliament wait while the deposed King fathoms the phenomena of his face and its relation to his mental processes.

The incoming King, "Lords Spiritual," the "Lords Temporal," the Commons, and history and the tragic end wait while Shakespeare makes the deposed King ask for a mirror! They still wait while he, with haunting realism, studies his face in the mirror and asks:

Was this the face
That everyday under his household roof
Did keep ten thousand men? Was this the face
That, like the sun, did make beholders wink?
Was this the face that fac'd so many follies,
And was at last out-fac'd by Bolingbroke?

As he dashes the mirror to the ground, the spell is broken. The power of that personality could no more be re-established than the thousand pieces and splinters of the mirror could be reassembled into a mirror. As he says:

For there it is, crack'd in a hundred shivers.—
Mark, silent king, the moral of this sport—
How soon my sorrow hath destroy'd my face.

Incidentally, these remind us of the fact, which has received little recognition since Shakespeare's days, that the major part of the events in the world's daily life are governed by the facial values and facial expressions of the hundreds of millions of people who make up the world's population. From the cradle to the dusk of life people's faces play a most important part in daily life. Young and old we may be aided in steps towards achieving that state of gentler selflessness that makes life less tense if we ask with King Richard: "Is this the face——?"

Applying the principle, in an election year, to candidates, and attempting to forecast their acts by the acts of predecessors, we open a vast new field of psychologic research if we ask "Is this the face——?"

ALICE HUNT BARTLETT.

INCENSE

Single rose,
Silver vase,
Blue curtained night.
Droll silver,
Dull silver,
Silver wrinkled white.
Into realms
Where beauty dwells
Transcending self
Aspire.
A simple thing to hold a rose
The madness of desire.

ELAINE WINDELER.

BEAUTY AND TRUTH

AH, Keats, I would that loveliness were true,
That beauty never blossomed in a lie;
For I have seen the hosts of wrong pursue

Beautiful banners splendid in the sky;
Beheld the noble music of a hymn
Inflame kind men to hate and crucify.

And I have watched a passing, covert whim—
(Seized and enraptured by a lovely song
Or by symphonic measures that bedim

The sense that sees disloyalty a wrong)—
Become magnificent desire, caressed
By false and evil music. All too long
The Muses, lured by surface charms, have blest
The knavish lie in lyric ermine dressed!

ROBIN LAMPSON.

AUGUST FANTASY

LILAC sky,
Like a dream
Too delicate for towns;
Half asleep,
Like a babe
Awaked by the sun;
Legend-free,
Like a truth
Too rich for fantasy;
E'en man's thought,
Like a cloud,
Would burst thy clarity;
E'en earth's love,
Like a Sun,
Would burn thy purity.

Pale one, proceed
In stillness ever:
I will not think,
Nor love.

TERENCE WHITE.

THE MARTYR

("... They counted not their lives dear")

HOW can I leave this darksome lair
To front my stark and staring fate!
How dare I face the trumpets' blare
And the lewd jesting voice of hate!
Alone, I shrink alone—shall I deny my God?
While the mob clamorous cries: "Where is thy vaunted God?"

Ah, now they bind me to the stake!
And the little, licking, flickering flames
Come stealing, stealing stealthily,
Straining higher, reaching nigher,
And I, on the pyre,
I am their desire!

Oh, the fire is creeping higher . . .
Now its ardent arms are round me
And its red embrace has found me,
Swoon I, die I where they bound me. . . .
(Alone, I shrink alone—Thou sav'st me not, O God!
While they vociferate: "Where is thy boasted God?")

Oh, now my Lord holds up my head
And high above me shines His cross,
He takes the searing pain instead
And crowds and cruel flames are dross!
And I, on the pyre,
I hear the angel choir!

Now my fear to exaltation
Changes, to a great elation!
There shall be no recantation,
Hold me, Lord, be my salvation!
Ah, Thy powerful arms are round me
And Thy sweet embrace has found me!

I sing, I shine, I soar, I fly,
Angels bear me thro' the sky!
I see the Lamb upon the throne

And hear the radiant hosts intone . . .
. . . 'Tis finished. . . . Glory be, I Die!

CHRISTINE L. HENDERSON

FOOTSTEPS

FEET tread a winding stairway
Downward and slow;
Whereon, impelled to go,
All rest withheld,
Feet may not stay.
And beyond one turning,
Unable which to know,
They reach a sudden door
Through which, again impelled,
They pass, and may not wait
Until the bolt be drawn,
Which draws itself immediate
To the treader's presence.

Thence out into imagined space,
Be it a vault wherein to creep—
The winding stairway vanished—
Wherein to sleep
With or without awaking ultimate
In some far-futur'd hour;
Or vasty emptiness
Unpeopled save by self
In form unknown,
With bright strange stars alone
In a clear quietness,
And breath of silent air
Breathed by an unheard power.

Behind, the door, the stair,
And the downward tread
In lost living motion
Towards the expectant door
Of footsteps that are dead.

E. B. C. THORNETT.

DISCOVERY

I have found Endymion,
Lost to love,
Lying prone upon the ground
Where the yellow spiders spin,
His boyish beauty hidden
Underneath a weeping willow,
One lithe arm bent for pillow.
Shadows move
Over his thighs white and thin.
Silver down upon his chin
Seems the autumn peaches skin,
And his biceps firm and round
Are like breasts of grebes that ride
Glistening upon the tide.

My hands reach to press
Overwhelming loveliness
To my breast.
I slide
My arm along his side
To free the mesh
Holding warm flesh from flesh,
To quench the drouth
Of love upon his mouth.

But no lashes flicker
On my cheek.
Could I but hear him speak
As I draw him closer, closer,
I might rest.

The spiders in the grass
Spin a golden glory round him,
Dreams, illusive dreams have bound him
To the Moon-maid,
She who creeps
Through the shade.
She was watching when I found him.
She only can awaken,

I must wander on forsaken.
Only she and I discover
Where he sleeps.
Will she wane
And Endymion wake again,
Endymion my lover?

EDITH WILLIS LINN.

THE HILLS

OH, the hills of green, my belovèd country,
Smooth and lustrous calm, with the hedgerows winding.
Shadows fill the vale; but the hills are shining—
Ah God, the hills.

Never cold and proud like the distant mountains;
Love they bring to me, and a longed-for comfort:
" You and I " they call in the quiet evenings,
And rest is sure.

Oh, the noise of crowds and the frenzied clamour,
Motor-cars and trams in the teeming city.
Beauty dies—is cold; but the hills recover
The heart of me.

Hills of friendliness, that is why they draw me;
Unashamed I speak to their understanding,
Free as self with self, and their gentle answer
Brings truth to me.

Old, forgotten years, and the hours now fleeting,
Centuries to come, they are all encountered,
Wrapped in loveliness that endureth ever,
Though death befall.

Hills of unity, so their voices whisper;
Arms enfold me round, and their heart-beats thrill me,
Teaching me to know, from their agelong wisdom,
One spirit breathes.

N. C. YENDELL.

ON THE POETRY OF JOHN MASEFIELD

AROUND no other modern English poet has there been waged such a spirited controversy as around John Masefield. To one school of critical opinion *The Everlasting Mercy* and *The Daffodil Fields* stand amongst the greatest poetic creations of the twentieth century; to another they are unspeakably vulgar and unnecessarily coarse, while a third regards them as potential masterpieces, marred by a perverted kind of affectation which is to-day all too common among a certain group of *soi-disant* realists. Something, no doubt, is to be said for all these views, and with equal certainty something is to be urged against them all; for truth to tell, Mr. Masefield has a charm and attraction even for his severest critic. The mere fact that he was appointed Poet Laureate in 1930 constitutes, of course, no real judgment upon his works, for during the past two and a half centuries, with one or two notable exceptions, the holders of that office have been distinguished by nothing so much as by their mediocrity. No, diverse as contemporary opinions are, the last word has yet to be said upon Mr. Masefield, and I venture to think that it will be many generations before that word is uttered. Time must do its work; meanwhile a modern critic must be content to set forth his own impressions, conscious always that they are his own, and therefore very personal and individual.

Mr. Masefield represents a definite reaction from Victorianism and all that that term implies in literature. Born at Ledbury in 1874, he is still but middle-aged, and since he spent his earlier years roving upon the sea and his literary career started comparatively late in his life, he escaped many of those influences which have left their mark upon other poets of his generation; I mean the influence of Tennyson, Browning and Matthew Arnold on the one hand, and Swinburne and the Rosettis on the other. It is not impossible to find a place for him in the "tradition" of English poetry, and to demonstrate his relation to writers who have preceded him; indeed, with many modern critics that has been the method of approach to his work.

Yet one feels that it was only by accident that he fell into any tradition at all. His genius was, and always has been, personal and independent. He is the antithesis of Sir William Watson. The austere correctness so characteristic of this latter writer is quite alien to the author of *Salt Water Ballads*, who prefers the more commonplace diction condemned so vehemently by our "old contemptible," while the typically nineteenth-century, and slightly aristocratic outlook of the older poet finds no place in the works of his younger contemporary. Not that this, in itself, constitutes a condemnation of either writer; but it was bound to weigh in Mr. Masefield's favour with the man in the street.

There is yet another difference between our poet and Sir William Watson, a difference which is fundamental, and is referable ultimately to the characters of the writers themselves. Watson, as we have seen, approaches life from an intellectual angle; Masefield from the angle of feeling. He is the poet of pity and justice for any hunted, ill-used and downtrodden thing, no matter whether it be a simple sailor, a drunken village youth, a poor widow, or a fox. They all have his sympathy. Of course, there have been other poets who have written of these things too. George Crabbe is one of them, and Thomas Hood, who, be it remembered, gave us *The Song of the Shirt* as well as comic verse, is another; but neither Crabbe nor Hood had really any first-hand experience of the life which they portrayed. John Masefield, on the other hand, is intimately acquainted with his people and their life. In his seafaring days he knew all the hardships of the lot of the common sailor, and he had experienced poverty—had, in fact, lived amongst it—so that he knew well that existence which was

> Sorrow sometimes, and joy, but always strife,
> Struggle to live, except just at the last.

He had seen its tragedy and its comedy, its heroism and its degradation, and in his poetry he depicts all these aspects.

His understanding of the poor and the common folk is indeed wonderful. It is to them that he dedicates his muse, vowing to consecrate whatever genius he may have to an interpretation of their lives, their aspirations and their deepest feelings. And what is the result? Pathos? Tragedy? Yes, but also beauty, especially beauty of character. The first volume of poems which Mr. Masefield published appeared in 1902 under the title of *Salt Water Ballads*. It contained a "consecration" which strikes the keynote of almost all its author's subsequent work. He will sing, he declares,

Not of the princes and prelates, with periwigged charioteers,
Riding triumphantly laurelled to lap the fat of the years—
Rather the scorned—the rejected—the men hemmed in with the spears.

Others may sing of the wine, and the wealth, and the mirth,
The portly presence of potentates goodly in girth;—
Mine be the dirt and the dross, the dust, the scum of the earth![1]

Now there is something very modern about this. It is definitely a declaration for the under-dog, and as such became, in effect, the formulated creed of that new democracy which, for the past thirty years, has been making its presence felt in politics, industry and culture alike. Compared with it, Tennyson's rather condescending and patronizing attempts to put in an occasional word for the common folk pale into insignificance. Mr. Masefield is everything that is anti-Tennysonian. What Rudyard Kipling has done for the rank and file of the British Army, he sets out to do for the man before the mast; and he certainly performs his task with as much success, for the *Salt Water Ballads* fall no whit below their companion volume, the *Barrack Room Ballads*, even if their appeal has not been quite so wide.

This leads us to a consideration of the point which has proved such a bone of contention with the critics, and upon which some writers, with a distorted sense of values, have made the poet's fame depend. I mean the question of his realism.[2] In practically all that he has written, Mr. Masefield is a realist. No matter whether he is treating of the sea or of lowly humanity (the two great themes which run through his works), a realistic presentation is his aim. The tang of the salt atmosphere is on our lips, the scent of the spray in our nostrils throughout all the sea poems, and oftentimes the cruelty and callousness of sea life is brought home to us, too, with a starkness and forcefulness that only a true seaman can appreciate. And then those pictures of the poor and unfortunate have a grimness and squalor about them absolutely true to life. Disagreeable as the subject may be in some of these pieces, no critic will be found so hardy as to deny that there is artistry about this kind of realism; unless, perchance, he is one of those who contend that the unbeautiful can never be admitted into the category of the artistic. But Mr. Masefield has another way of enhancing his realistic effects, which is more doubtful. It is the method of the mediocre novelist and of the very ultra-modern writer who feels that it is a sign of intellectual and moral emancipation for him to load his pages with language which usually is not uttered in decent society. Admittedly, there is nothing morally or ethically wrong in it, but there is much that is artistically wrong. Take as an instance the second stanza of the poem *Bill*. Does not the coarse, vulgar language grate upon the senses till we are almost tempted to deny to the lines the name of poetry, so much has the poet cheapened his art by this straining after realism? And when they are compared with the impressiveness of the first stanza the incongruity is more apparent still.

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[1] For kind permission to make this and the other quotations in the present essay I am indebted to Mr. Masefield and to the Macmillan Company of America.

[2] On this question see especially an article by M. Floris Delattre, entitled *La Réalisme Poetique de John Masefield*, in "La Revue Anglo-Américaine" for June, 1924.

He lay dead on the cluttered deck and stared at the cold skies,
With never a friend to mourn for him nor a hand to close his eyes:
" Bill, he's dead," was all they said; " he's dead, 'n' there he lies."

The mate came forward at seven bells and spat across the rail:
" Just lash him up wi' some holystone in a clout o' rotten sail,
'N', rot ye, get a gait on ye, ye're slower 'n a bloody snail! "

Or again, look at this instance from *The Everlasting Mercy*, where the ribald drunkard is cursing a local farmer.

And one of these dark winter nights
He'll learn I mean to have my rights;
I'll bloody him a bloody fix,
I'll bloody burn his bloody ricks.

Now this, no doubt, is meant for realism; it exemplifies Wordsworth's theory of poetic diction carried to its utmost extremity; and yet, if we are honest, we shall find it difficult to persuade ourselves that it is truly poetic. Not that it is untrue to actual life; it is not. It simply proves the essential weakness in the preface to the *Lyrical Ballads*. Of course the drunkard and the common sailor swear; of course the language of the ignorant folk is frequently unwholesome, but that, after all, is only a superficial trait, and it is a poor kind of realism that has to rely on superficiality. In the cheap novelist it might be pardoned, but we are surely entitled to expect something more than this conventional cant and jargon from a poet; for great poetry, remember, is concerned with the deepest feelings of the individual and the greatest issues of life; with high aspirations and spiritual experiences, and in more than one of his verses Mr. Masefield has shown that he is a poet in this noblest sense of the term. The piece *Dawn*, printed in *Ballads and Poems*, is full of splendid natural description.

> The dawn comes cold; the haystack smokes,
> The green twigs crackle in the fire,
> The dew is dripping from the oaks,
> And sleepy men bear milking yokes
> Slowly towards the cattle-byre. . . .
>
> Beyond the stack where we have lain
> The road runs twisted like a snake
> (The white road to the land of Spain),
> The road that we must foot again,
> Though the feet halt and the heart ache.

I must confess that for me there is more realism here than in all the oaths and blasphemies of *The Everlasting Mercy*. The scene lives in the imagination, so clearly and carefully has the poet delineated it, while the very spirit of dawn in the country breathes through every one of his lines.

It is in his short descriptive pieces that Mr. Masefield excels. The narrative poems are, in most cases, marred by an element of sensationalism from which he seems unable to escape. Not that they are devoid of merit; on the contrary, *Dauber*, *The Daffodil Fields*, *The Everlasting Mercy* and *The Widow in the Bye Street* rise at times to heights truly beautiful and sublime; but their merits lie in isolated, individual passages rather than in the poems as a whole. Now one comes across a wonderful piece of word-painting, now a character-sketch which shows a real knowledge of men and an insight into their inner lives, and again a passage which embodies the very atmosphere of a scene as only true poetry can. Yet, as a recent Dutch critic has remarked, so far as the narrative element is concerned, every one of these pieces might, if retold in prose, gain rather than lose in the process.[1] And the reason is not far to seek. Not every narrative is fitted for telling in verse, and unfortunately, almost all Masefield's stories are those which sort ill with music, rhyme and rhythm. To begin with, there is their sordidness. They are all concerned with blackguards, either reformed, unreformed, or in process of reformation. Now here, I suppose, someone will point out that other poets besides our present Laureate have written of blackguards, and have never been accused of degrading their art; Browning, for instance. Well, I readily admit it. But where Mr. Masefield differs from Browning is in the fact that he seems to take an unhealthy delight in wallowing in the sordid. Even when his heroes (or villains, whichever we prefer to call them) have turned their faces to the light and have become reformed characters, they persist, like Lot's wife, in looking back on what they have left behind. They are revivalists, as it were, who will never believe that they are really converted unless they can tell their hearers, with all kinds of lurid details, graphic stories of their past life of wickedness. Saul Kane, the converted drunkard, is by no means a convincing character precisely because of this. When we behold him gloating over the sins he is supposed to have abjured, recalling those old days when he wallowed in the mire of the world, we cannot help wondering whether there is not something of the hypocrite in him. Evidently the past life still has a fascination for him, and, to use the words of the Dutch critic whom I have quoted above, "whenever he recalls his previous exploits the Devil rubs his hands, feeling that his hold on his former votary has not gone yet, and that it may strengthen as time proceeds." As for the suitability of such stories as these for relation in poetry, the question is a subtle one; but personally I feel that poetry should be ennobling, or at least, not degrading, and in so far as the whole attitude of Saul Kane *is* a degraded one, *The Everlasting Mercy* would have been better told in another medium.

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[1] Willem van Doorn: *Of The Tribe of Homer, Being an Enquiry into the Theory and Practice of Narrative Verse Since* 1833. (Amsterdam. 1932.)

Reynard the Fox contains a pageant of characters second only to those of *The Canterbury Tales*, and they are all presented with clarity and precision, too; yet as a narrative poem it fails because of its episodic nature. But *The Widow in the Bye Street* is in a different category. True, there is still the same drab story as in the other narrative pieces, but it has redeeming features. Full of vitality, naturalness and easy dialogue, it is absolutely devoid of all sentimentality; the note which the poet strikes is rather that of the tragic dramatist who seeks to show his characters at war with their environment without any suggestion of weakly passion; or that of Thomas Hardy, whose Wessex folk, for all their simplicity, take life stoically and philosophically, accepting the sweets with thankfulness and the bitter as inevitable. The story begins *in medias res*.

Down Bye Street, in a little Shropshire town,
There lived a widow with her only son:
She had no wealth nor title to renown,
Nor any joyous hours, never one.
She rose from ragged mattress before the sun
And stitched all day until her eyes were red,
And had to stitch, because her man was dead.

Sometimes she fell asleep, she stitched so hard,
Letting the linen fall upon the floor;
And hungry cats would steal in from the yard,
And mangy chicken pecked about the door
Craning their necks so ragged and so sore
To search the room for bread-crumbs, or for mouse,
But they got nothing in the widow's house.[1]

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[1] These and the succeeding stanzas from the same poem are quoted by permission of Messrs. Sidgwick and Jackson.

Once more we are reminded of Chaucer, with his habit of plunging the reader into the facts of the narrative straightway; and then the poem which follows is a masterpiece of compression, centring around the story of four tragic souls. I say the story, but, indeed, the actual narrative is the least important part, for what Mr. Masefield is really concerned with is the spiritual life of these four people, and their reaction to their hard experiences. There are only a hundred pages of it—little enough for a subject of this magnitude—yet not a single relevant detail is left out. Yes, the subject is drab enough, and the fierce indictment of capital punishment which occurs towards the end savours rather of Galsworthy and the modern school of dramatists; but the whole story is pervaded with that sense of desolation so characteristic of Shakespearean tragedy. Perhaps also the versification owes something to Shakespeare, for in each stanza the strength is invariably reserved for the last line, even as in the Shakespearean sonnet it is reserved for the concluding couplet.

In spite of the harrowing nature of the story, the poem is by no means devoid of beauty. The conception of the character of the mother, patient, long-suffering and forgiving towards her erring son is beautiful in itself; and then there is the quiet, sunny Shropshire countryside which forms the background to the narrative. Even in the darkest moments we are conscious of its all-pervading presence, and frequently, in the manner of Mr. A. E. Housman, flashes of gorgeous description are introduced to intensify the tragedy by the force of contrast. At the very moment when Jim has been condemned to death for murder, and Anne, who is indirectly responsible for his doom, is leaving the town grief-stricken, the poet pauses to describe the peace and beauty of the country around.

So the talk passes as the train descends
Into the vale, and halts, and starts to climb
To where the apple-bearing country ends
And pleasant pastured hills rise sweet with thyme,
Where clinking sheep bells make a broken chime
And sunwarm gorses rich the air with scent
And kestrels poise for mice, there Anna went.

> There, in the April, in the garden close,
> One heard her in the morning singing sweet,
> Calling the birds from the unbudded rose,
> Offering her lips with grains for them to eat.
> The redbreasts come with little wiry feet,
> Sparrows, and tits, and all wild feathery things,
> Brushing her lifted face with quivering wings.

Finally the poem concludes on a note of calm and beauty, with the mother, now demented, wandering through the woods and meadows, singing her crazy songs and waiting patiently for the return of her boy, while the mowers, hearing her, listen for a moment, and then resume the measured swing of their scythes.

For the average man, however, Mr. Masefield is pre-eminently the poet of the sea, and it is mainly as such, I venture to suggest, that he will be remembered in ages to come. For his sea poetry has an enduring quality about it. It has caught the very spirit of the ocean, with all its adventure, its glamour and its hardship. Sea-faring life has often been depicted in English poetry, though when we think of the great part that the sea has played in our national history, it is rather surprising that it has not figured even more prominently. The old Anglo-Saxon literature was impregnated with the sea, and many of the mediæval ballads, such as that of *Sir Patrick Spens*, tell of the dangers as well as the thrills in the life of the sailor. Even in the prosaic, urbanized eighteenth century we come across Falconer's *Shipwreck*, while towards the end of that period, as all students of literature know, appeared that incomparable poem of nautical life, *The Ancient Mariner*. Now Mr. Masefield represents our twentieth century contribution to this tradition; and yet, in a sense, his poetry is not traditional at all. It is lacking in the classic formality of Falconer, and it has nothing of the magic of Coleridge. Like his narrative verse, its aim is realism. In spirit it is most nearly akin to the ballads, save that where they were essentially artless, these have been written with a conscious, artistic aim in view.

With Mr. Masefield the lure of the sea is an elemental power. Everyone knows his *Sea-Fever*, so there is no need to quote it here. It expresses the deepest feelings of all who have been nurtured on the high seas and have found there a strange spirit of wanderlust whose grip is so strong upon them that it will never let them rest ashore. But there is more than this in it. There is a strange indifference to hardships and danger, nay, almost a joy in them. Notice the things upon which the poet lays stress ; he will have no new-fangled steam vessel, but a sailing ship, and to steer her, not a compass, but a star. The song of the wind in his ears gives him delight, and " the grey mist on the sea's face " fascinates him, while the choppy ocean, presaging a storm, sends the blood coursing through his veins for sheer love of adventure. It is just nature, nature in all her moods and manifested through all the elements that appeals to him. Even the ships have a personality and individuality of their own, symbols as they are of heroic beauty, battling against mighty forces and winning through. In short, the sea, and all about it, means life, life as it was defined by R. L. Stevenson in his essay *On Life and Living*, and it is for that that Mr. Masefield is constantly craving.

Yet for all their beauty, in many of these poems there is manifested a certain callousness, and an indifference to death, ugliness and brutality. No doubt, it is again all part of the author's realism, but, as has been pointed out already, too much of it becomes the negation of realism, and so defeats its own purpose. Yes, Mr. Masefield makes us feel the lure and the magic of the sea as only an experienced seaman could ; but above all he makes us feel its mystery ; indeed, it is probably here that the whole of its attraction lies, for mystery at once suggests quest, and quest means adventure. There on the ocean, where death may strike at any moment through rock or storm, it is as if man is standing on the brink of the eternal, with the unknown all before him. The very water itself, with its huge expanse and its ceaseless motion is surely suggestive of eternity ; and as for the unknown, it lies beyond the mists and fogs, which are like a veil to another world. I wonder how many people have noticed the frequency with which fog is mentioned in Mr. Masefield's poems of the sea. It occurs in *Sea-Fever*, and in many of the *Salt Water Ballads* ; but by far the best picture of it is in that passage from *Dauber* which describes the approach to Cape Horn ; a splendid piece of artistry, unparallelled in modern literature, save, perhaps, in the pages of Joseph Conrad.

It was all black and starless. Peering down
Into the water, trying to pierce the gloom,
One saw a dim, smooth, oily glitter of brown,
Heaving and dying away and leaving room
For yet another. Like the march of doom
Came these great powers of marching silences ;
Then fog came down, dead cold, and hid the seas.

They set the Dauber to the fog-horn. There
He stood upon the poop, making to sound
Out of the pump the sailors' nasal blare,
Listening lest ice should make the note resound.
She bayed there like a solitary hound
Lost in a covert, all the watch she bayed :
The fog, come closlier down, no answer made.

Denser it grew until the ship was lost ;
The elemental hid her, she was merged
In mufflings of dark death like a man's ghost
New to the change of death, yet thither urged.
Then from the hidden waters something surged
Mournful, despairing, great, greater than speech,
A noise like one slow wave on a still beach.

Mournful, and then again mournful, and still
Out of the night that mighty voice arose,
The Dauber at his fog-horn felt the thrill :
Who rode that desolate sea ? What forms were those ?
Mournful, from things defeated, in the throes
Of memory of some conquered hunting ground,
Out of the night of death arose the sound.

. . . . .

A wall of nothing at the world's last edge,
Where no life came, except defeated life.
The Dauber felt shut in within a hedge
Behind which form was hidden and thought was rife,
And that a blinding flash, a thrust, a knife,
Would sweep the hedge away and make all plain,
Brilliant beyond all words, blinding the brain.

Incidentally also this particular passage provides an illustration of another aspect of Mr. Masefield's art; his very accurate description of the noises of the sea. And what a multitude of noises there are! Whether it is the dashing of the waves upon the vessel, the roar of the tempest, the sound of the whales, the muffled tone of hooters in the fog, or the cawing of the sea-fowl, he can depict them exactly, and without any apparent effort. Always he selects the right word, for his vocabulary is wide, and he has a habit, too, of coining onomatopœic phrases of uncommon felicity.

Mr. Masefield's endeavours in the field of nature poetry, however, have not been confined to the sea. He loves the country, too, and can find as much of the spirit of life and mystery in the wide, open spaces as upon the water. *Tewkesbury Road*, with its well-known opening

It is good to be out on the road, and going one knows not where,
Going through meadow and village, one knows not whither or why,

again expresses his desire for communion with the elements, while it appears once more in *London Town*, a piece with something of the downright English simplicity and love of the rural scene about it. Still again it occurs in another of his typical poems, *The West Wind*. The west wind brings him memories of home, and a beautiful picture of orchards full of apple-blossom, cool meadows, and deep shady woods; so he concludes,

It's the white road westwards is the road I must tread
To the green grass, the cool grass, and rest for heart and head,
To the violets and the warm hearts, and the thrushes' song,
In the fine land, the west land, the land where I belong.

I have just used the phrase "downright English simplicity." I paused after I had written it, for though I intended it to apply only to one poem, on a second reading it seemed to sum up as concisely as any phrase could do, the Poet Laureate as he appears in the best of his work. He is, from first to last, an Englishman. There is nothing of the jingoist about him, nor is his spirit in any way akin to that of the imperialistic Rudyard Kipling, whose outlook is a mixture of the Victorian and Edwardian rather than modern. But he is steeped in affection for everything English. He loves the English countryside and the English character; he takes a keen delight in the beauty of the hills, the sky and the sea, while English flowers in particular have an appeal for him. Then there is that intense joy in living which he expresses in *Biography*, and the fierce delight in toil and danger, struggle and conflict, all inherited from our old Viking ancestors who roved the seas on their pirate expeditions and chronicled their zest for adventure in their folk literature. What, after all, are these stories of the sea but a modernized *Beowulf*? All the essential elements are the same. Beowulf and his men faced life with ardour and courage, conscious that death might take them any minute; and with Mr. Masefield it is the same. Joy in life, because it *is* life, is the essence of his poetry.

> Laugh and be merry, remember, better the world with a song,
> Better the world with a blow in the teeth of a wrong.
> Laugh, for the time is brief, a thread the length of a span.
> Laugh, and be proud to belong to the old proud pageant of man.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> Laugh and be merry together, like brothers akin,
> Guesting awhile in the rooms of a beautiful inn,
> Glad till the dancing stops, and the lilt of the music ends.
> Laugh till the game is played; and be you merry, my friends."

That is his message, even as also it was the message of his predecessor, Robert Louis Stevenson. I have already suggested a comparison between the two some few pages back, and by a reader closely acquainted with the works of both it might be carried a good deal further; but I do not wish to labour the point. Suffice it to say that the essential qualities of each, as expressed in his poetry, are the same; that both face life with keen enjoyment and death with equanimity, and that a counterpart to Stevenson's well-known *Requiem* is to be found in the *Song at Parting* which closes the *Salt Water Ballads*.

A detailed study of nature in the poetry of Mr. Masefield would occupy many pages, so we can hope to do no more here than touch upon a few aspects of the subject, and indicate possible avenues of approach for a student prepared to undertake a more minute examination. *Reynard the Fox* breathes the pure air of the countryside. Nature is all alive with vitality and joy; the flowers bloom, the birds sing, the meadows stretch green before us and the whole panorama tells of happiness. The very first stanza of the poem gives the atmosphere. The three-hundred-years-old " Cock and Pye " where the meet is gathering has a most fascinating and romantic air about it; it is the kind of place that we all know, though not one of us, probably, has ever seen it. But it *is* a romantic place; we can tell that from the description; and it is surrounded with all kinds of romantic associations. In the old coaching days it was a post-house (the very coach road runs before the door still); and then there are whispered stories of how, at one time, it was the haunt of Benjamin, the notorious highwayman who was the terror of the roads. Such a place could not but be situated amidst beautiful country.

Mr. Masefield knows his rural folk and their habits intimately. He has studied them at first hand; that is obvious; and here he presents them to us in all their reality. What, for instance, could give an atmosphere more truly rustic than this?

> At half-past ten some lads on foot
> Came to be beaters to a shoot
> Of rabbits on the Warren Hill.
> Rough sticks they had, and Hob and Jill,
> Their ferrets, in a bag, and netting.
> They talked of dinner-beer, and betting,
> And jeered at those who stood around.
> They rolled their dogs upon the ground,
> And teased them: " Rats," they cried, " go fetch!"
> " Go, seek, good Roxer; 'z bite, good betch."

The poem, for the main part, is the story of flight and pursuit; but it is interspersed with vivid little cameos of natural beauty. The sounds and the scents of the country, too, are described; and when the piece comes to an end we are brought back, very skilfully, to the quiet landscape on a moonlight evening. Only the outstanding feaures are given, but they are the appropriate ones for the author's purpose. So, starting with the life and bustle of morning, we end with the peace of night.

> The beech-wood grey rose dim in the night
> With moonlight fallen in pools of light,
> The long, dead leaves on the ground were rimed ;
> A clock struck twelve and the church bells chimed.

There are but four lines, and in these four lines only four elements—the woods rising dark in the background, the light of the moon, the dead leaves strewing the ground, and then the clear sound of the striking clock reverberating through the silence of the night. But they are sufficient. A superfluity of detail would have broken the impression.

The Daffodil Fields is another poem full of exquisite natural imagery. The story is tragic enough, yet it is significant that the title has actually little to do with the narrative ; it refers rather to the setting, and it is to this setting that we are brought back at the end of each canto. The beauty of the daffodils, with their blaze of colour and their rhythmical dance as they are shaken by the wind, is ever present in the poet's mind to make more poignant the human tragedy. And this is often the case in the poetry of Mr. Masefield ; he brings the beautiful in nature and the ugly in life into close juxtaposition. I was going to say into contrast and conflict, but that would not be quite correct, for whatever we may say of our Poet Laureate we can never accuse him of pessimism. It is not that he means to belittle and demean human existence by comparison with the life of the flowers ; rather he feels that even the most degraded life or the most tragic occurrence will reveal something beautiful, and this beauty is absorbed into, and blended with, the natural background. That, perhaps, is why the hour of twilight is always so significant for Mr. Masefield. It suggests a borderline mood, when light blends with darkness, day with night, when even the least beautiful sights of the world lose some of their glaring ugliness and take on a beauty of their own, caught from the setting sun and the falling dusk. If the poet has an eye for light and colour, with equal felicity he can depict the more subdued tones of twilight, as Coleridge could depict the ethereal beauty of a tropical night as well as the blaze of day ; or as Shakespeare could sound the note of peace and calm at the end of a tragedy of spiritual strife and stress. Notice how many of the narrative poems conclude with a picture of the evening or the sunset. *The Everlasting Mercy*, certainly, is an exception, and there is a reason for it. Saul Kane has forsaken his old life and turned his face to the dawn ; it is therefore appropriate that we should leave him, not when the shadows are falling, but when night is giving place to day. But in practically every other case the tragedy of suffering and hardship is beautified by the benign influence of the descending evening. Most impressive of all is the conclusion to *Dauber*. After her harrowing experiences the ship is drifting into harbour.

> Then in the sunset's flush they went aloft,
> And unbent sails in that most lovely hour
> When the light gentles and the wind is soft,
> And beauty in the heart breaks like a flower.
> Working aloft they saw the mountain tower,
> Snow to the peak ; they heard the launchmen shout ;
> And bright along the bar the lights came out.
>
> And then the night fell dark, and all night long
> The pointed mountain pointed at the stars,
> Frozen, alert, austere ; the eagle's song
> Screamed from her desolate screes and splintered scars.
> On her intense crag where the air is sparse
> The stars looked down ; their many golden eyes
> Watched her and burned, burned out, and came to rise.

By a scrupulous choice of diction and by clear-cut imagery, Mr. Masefield is able to produce atmospheres which reflect subjective mental states. Particularly is this so in his sonnets, where the quest for abstract, spiritualized beauty is represented under a variety of symbols. The twenty-seventh sonnet, for instance, re-creates most convincingly the weird strangeness of a quiet house at dead of night as it appears to one tossing restlessly on his pillow while the clock ticks out the slow hours ; and the same supernatural air hangs about the poem *Haunted*, from the volume *King Cole and Other Poems*. As the writer sits lonely beside the fire on a winter evening, listening to the multitude of noises that echo so strangely through the silence, it almost seems as if the ghost of the late inhabitant, a student and an antiquarian, is still there as an unseen presence. For in very truth, in that row of old, leather-bound octavos, now covered with dust, in the writing-desk that he once used, in those old folio sheets, scrawled over in a hand that is now scarcely legible, something of himself still remains. On all that he touched he left his impress, and the inanimate became alive through contact with his personality.

> This was his room, this darkness of old death,
> This coffin-room, with lights like embrasures,
> The place is poisonous with him ; like a breath
> On glass, he stains the spirit ; he endures.

The well-known *Cargoes* is another instance of this employment of symbolism to suggest atmosphere. Written, so the author avers, in a very few minutes one Sunday morning it is a perfect, well-finished entity. Notice what a vast conspectus it takes in. It is a survey in little of the world's growth and change, from remotest times to the present day ; a commentary on our so-called civilization. Each stanza is a symbolic epitome of a particular period of world-history ; and it really does epitomize it, too, recapturing all the essentials of its spirit through the description of the cargo of a single, typical ship. From the ivory, the wines and the cedar wood of Nineveh, we skip over many hundreds of years to the diamonds, the jewels and the gold of Spain. A little more of a commercial atmosphere, this ! And finally we reach the climax with the full fruit of twentieth-century civilization—the coal, iron-ware and tin trays of the British coaster. Is it an indictment of our present-day industrialism, and the way in which it has spoiled beauty even on the seas ? Perhaps it is ; but to ponder long over this question is to miss the wonderful artistry of the piece, with its blending of realism and imagination, theme and technique. The rhythm changes from stanza to stanza. About the first verse there is something very sunny and leisurely, just typical of the movement of those old ships in the lazy Mediterranean of long ago. The second is characterized by grandeur, symbolic of the pride and the might of Spain while in the third we can hear the sharp, abrupt "puff, puff" of the modern trading vessel. I doubt whether Mr. Masefield has packed so much of significance into so small a space in any other poem.

I have characterized Mr. Masefield as a poet of life, but he is more than that ; he is a poet of high spiritual aspirations, for his questing earnestness passes beyond the things immediately apprehensible to the five senses, into the world of the intangible, where substance vanishes. As we read those poems we are always conscious of a sense of conflict, a conflict between good and evil, between elemental forces and the indomitable spirit of man, or between mind and matter. It is present in that early poem, *The Seekers*, as a romantic idealism. A mind in quest of beauty is shocked and disgusted by the unæsthetic materialism which it meets at every turn, and breaks out with the cry,

> We seek the City of God, and the haunt where Beauty dwells,
> And we find the noisy mart and the sound of burial bells.
> Never the golden city, where radiant people meet,
> But the dolorous town where mourners are going about the street.

It is present, too, in *Dauber*, a penetrating psychological study which resolves itself into a song of the victory of spirit over matter, the Dauber's indomitable courage withstanding all physical hardship. He had gone to sea to gain first-hand experience of nautical life. He did gain it, and he suffered in the process both mentally and physically ; but it meant a spiritual awakening.

It will be realized, then, that a deeply religious strain lies at the bottom of Mr. Masefield's poetry, founded on a recognition of the wonder and mystery in the lowliest existence, and faith in the fundamental goodness of human nature. We might, I suppose, call him a pantheist and an immanentist, for he is firmly convinced that the poet's quest for beauty should be directed primarily within, not without ; yet for all that, there is also a very pronounced element of fatalism in his works, particularly in the narrative poems. An impending doom seems constantly to hang over his characters. Tragedy is foreshadowed from the very beginning, and, as in the Wessex novels of Thomas Hardy, the merest accident often decides issues of life and death. This attitude to life, no doubt, is inseparable from the sea, and in a sense, from the seaman's point of view there is some truth in it, for, on the wide ocean, tossed about by wave and storm, man is very much at the mercy of forces outside his own control. But when we enter the field of morality, and spheres where character plays an important part, it is more questionable. So far as the actual narrative is concerned, this element of fatalism is undoubtedly a blemish. It is over-strained, and the artifice of tragic foreshadowing is often carried to the length of improbability. From a purely artistic point of view, on the other hand (and, be it remembered, artistry is not bound to adhere too closely to probability), they do make for greater impressiveness and heighten the tragedy, besides giving a unity of design and impression to the poem. They show that our Poet Laureate might have made a really great dramatist had he cared to venture farther into that field than he has done.

In these days we have become accustomed, almost inevitably, to look for some marks of the war on the work of our modern poets, assuming that none who were writing during the years 1914 to 1918 could have gone untouched by that world conflict. What then, one asks, was the effect of the war on the poetry of John Masefield ? Well, it seems to have strengthened it and rid it of many of those crudities by which previously it had been marred. I have already referred to the poet's faith in beauty ; in the verses written after the outbreak of war this becomes even more marked, for to Mr. Masefield that scene of world carnage was the consummation of the conflict between the beautiful and the squalid, and he had no doubts as to which finally must emerge triumphant. Henceforth we find less insistence on ugliness in his poetry ; a faith in the continuity of all that is good and sweet in life has taken its place. The verses entitled *August 1914* make his position plain. They open with a most peaceful picture of the English countryside on a summer evening, something in the strain of the early stanzas of Gray's *Elegy*.

> How still this quiet cornfield is to-night!
> By an intenser glow the evening falls,
> Bringing, not darkness, but a deeper light;
> Among the stooks a partridge covey calls.
>
> The windows glitter on the distant hill;
> Beyond the hedge the sheep-bells in the fold
> Stumble on sudden music and are still;
> The forlorn pinewoods droop above the wold.

And then across this scene cuts all the horror of war. The natives of the place, who took delight to gaze upon the fields and to breathe the scent of the flowers on such a night as this, are taken from their homes to die in foreign lands. But they carry something of their countryside with them, for its subtle influences have become intimate parts of their very personality, and when Death takes from them the sight of slaughter and destruction their spirits return once again to that dear land which they loved so well. Beauty has outlived slaughter and chaos.

> All the unspoken worship of these lives
> Spent in forgotten wars at other calls
> Glimmers upon these fields where evening drives
> Beauty, like breath, so gently darkness falls.
>
> Darkness that makes the meadows holier still,
> The elm trees sadden in the hedge, a sigh
> Moves in the beech-clump on the haunted hill,
> The rising planets deepen in the sky,
>
> And silence broods like spirit on the brae,
> A glimmering moon begins, the moonlight runs
> Over the grasses of the ancient way
> Rutted this morning by the passing guns.

This worship of beauty seems to have grown upon the poet with the years. It flashes out now and again in an early poem like *The Creed*, where we find an imaginary picture of the human soul undergoing a process of purification by transmigration and reincarnation, in each one of its lives shedding some of its imperfections until finally it attains to

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[1] A shock of sheaves of corn, generelly twelve in number.

the fullness of Love, Beauty and Truth. But even more clearly is it in evidence in the sonnets, published in the same volume with *Lollingdon Downs*. Vague though some of them are, they are full of pensiveness and feeling, and the whole forty odd, taken together, form a cycle on the subject of beauty. Sometimes it is of beauty in the abstract that the author writes, sometimes of the beauty of nature, and sometimes of beauty as it is revealed in woman's love or the human character. But always, within the short compass of those fourteen lines, is packed a wealth of thought, expressed in telling imagery and forceful language; for when he is willing to subject his genius to the curb of discipline, Mr. Masefield is a master in the art of condensation. There is something Shakespearean about these sonnets. The rhyme scheme, with its neat concluding couplet, is certainly that of Shakespeare, and there is present, too, something of that typical Shakespearean restraint and wistfulness, as well as a finely-chiselled phraseology which the great poet himself would surely have approved.

It may be because of this passionate attachment to beauty that Mr. Masefield displays so genuine and so deep a reverence for women, deeper, perhaps than any other living writer. I am not thinking now of love-poetry as that term is generally understood, for it is not often that our poet falls to praising his mistress's eyebrow; but in many of his verses he does pay sincere and heartfelt homage to that nobility of mind, beauty of character and patient altruism which he sees exemplified in the highest type of womanhood. Under the title *C.L.M.* he writes a most affecting piece to his dead mother, while *Imagination*, which appeared in the same collection, is dedicated to all that is gentle and sweetly human in the feminine character.

Sometimes, as in the following chanty from the tragedy of *Pompey the Great*, this admiration and reverence is touched with pathos at the thought that often, for all their devotion, women reap only pain and bitter disappointment.

Kneel to the beautiful women who bear us this strange, brave fruit.
Man with his soul so noble: man half god and half brute.

Women bear him in pain that he may bring them tears.
He is a king on earth, he rules for a term of years.
And the conqueror's prize is dust and lost endeavour.
And the beaten man becomes a story for ever.
For the gods employ strange means to bring their will to be.
We are in the wise gods' hands, and more we cannot see.

What place Mr. Masefield will finally come to occupy in English poetry is no easy matter to determine. There are some writers whose every syllable should be read; there are others who require judicious selection, and the best poets do not always belong to the first class. For an artist must be judged on the quality, not the quantity of his work; nor is an author who produces but three or four exquisite masterpieces, as some of our English poets have done, necessarily the inferior of his fellow who can boast of some scores of equal merit. We have heard in the past a good deal about art for art's sake, and the natural corollary to that doctrine has been a tendency, amongst a certain school of critics, to judge a work on what they please to call its own merits, without any reference whatever to the genius which gave it being. But any artistic creation, whether in the sphere of painting, music or literature, is surely only meaningful in so far as it reflects its creator's mind and personality. In criticism and appreciation, then, it is with a writer's genius, rather than with his work as such that we are concerned, and that genius may find as full expression in a single poem as in a whole volume. We should still recognize Keats as a poet of the first rank if he had written only *The Eve of Saint Agnes*, *Hyperion*, and a few of his sonnets.

Now Mr. Masefield's work is far from being impeccable; he does not, therefore, fall within our first class of poets. Yet for all that he undoubtedly *is* a poet, and scrupulous selection could (and in due time no doubt will) compile a Masefield anthology of unusual distinction. It will not be a large anthology, for only the best of its author's work will be admitted, and in many of his pieces his faults, alas, are only too obvious. They need not be laboured here, for many a critic has pointed them out already. Perhaps his worst deficiency is his apparent lack of the faculty of self-criticism, which results inevitably in his passing off as poetry work that is offensive to the ear of a reader trained in the tradition of the nineteenth century. And it is not only in specific cases that this blemish appears. Even in the more meritorious of his poems he will drop, unawares, into prosaic passages, while occasionally he is guilty of pathos as incongruous and ludicrous as any perpetrated by his eighteenth-century predecessors, Colley Cibber and William Whitehead. His native similes, however well conceived they may be in themselves, are unfortunately not always appropriate ; and then, as Mr. Arthur Hood pointed out in THE POETRY REVIEW of May, 1932, he is inclined to overload both his narrative and his descriptive pieces with a superfluity of detail, while faulty rhymes are to be found upon practically every page. For a poet who has published so voluminously, his themes are unusually restricted (there are only three or four altogether) yet no one can accuse Mr. Masefield of monotony. Every individual work has some characteristic unshared by any other, every one of his volumes from earliest to latest, has struck an intensely individual note. To classify them is a task almost impossible ; they will stand in the same category with no other modern poetry. We might, I suppose, say that Masefield is a romantic, and we could find good grounds for our opinion. There is about his work the freshness and suggestiveness of imagery that is inseparable from romance ; his freedom of diction and technique, too, is merely the logical outcome of the theories and practice of the writers of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, while that questing spirit, that insatiable desire for new perceptions and new experiences has always been typical of the romantic mind. Yes, Mr. Masefield is thus far a romantic ; yet to no single one of our great romantic poets is he comparable. The *Songs and Ballads* show the influence of W. B. Yeats mingled with a tinge of Pre-Raphaelitism, and his intense zest for life is reminiscent of Stevenson. He has Chaucer's gift of character portrayal, the beauty of Keats, the colour of Coleridge, the wisdom of Burns, and the verve and liveliness of the Manx poet, T. E.

Brown. Taking his work all in all, it must be confessed that he writes better of nature than of men, that his lyrics are more finished than his narrative pieces, that even of the lyrics the best are the short ones. Nearly all aspects of the natural scene find a place in his verses, and all are treated with appreciation, understanding and sympathy. He is impressed by nobility of spirit, whether in the human being or in animals, he can feel the glory and charm of a quiet country scene, be it in the blaze of day or under the evening sky, and he knows equally well the joy of pulsating life in the open ; but above all he is attracted by the sea. She it is who has inspired some of his greatest poems, gems by the loss of which our national literature would be the poorer. If he has written much that is technically imperfect, in some of his verses he shows himself an accomplished master of his craft, striking a wonderfully equal poise between thought and action, rhythm and feeling. Of his work as Laureate it is yet too early to judge, for he has still many years before him ; but so far, one must confess, it has not reached any heights of inspiration. His ode written for the opening of the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre rose but little above the average poem of this kind, while his latest work, *The Tale of Troy*, has proved somewhat disappointing to those of his public who took so keen a delight in *Reynard the Fox* and *Lollingdon Downs* ; but let us hope that these are only temporary abberations. It is still the earlier works that charm and please ; about the later ones, printed in the reissue of his *Collected Poems* (1933) there is a different atmosphere altogether. The poet is less sure of himself, less confident of his achievement. And one detects, too, an underlying strain of disillusionment, as though the author had begun to doubt the value of popular applause won at the expense of true art and euphony. Readers of Walter Savage Lander will recall how, in his sonnet to Robert Browning, he exalted the lone singer, the voice crying in the wilderness, as it were ; and many a great poet has chosen to remain in the wilderness, a prophet without a following, rather than pander to the vulgar taste. Now our Laureate has consistently refused to do that; more and more he has tended to play for the popular ear, and the result is that his earlier compositions remain his best. Personally, from the tone of his latest work, I feel that he has realized this, and that there is yet hope that he may return to that earlier strain. For Mr. Masefield's muse has still the vitality of former days; his genius does but sleep till some new theme shall call it back to wakefulness. And his message? Well, it is not far to seek. It is the supreme value of pure human worth, irrespective of wealth or social class. With Rabbi Ben Ezra he can cry,

> What I aspired to be
> And was not, comforts me.

And in this age of struggle and disappointment, when many are losing their grip on life and are falling a prey to bitter disillusion, that is a message which needs all the emphasis that can be given it.

FREDERICK T. WOOD.

DUST

WE talk of cosmic dust that settles, falls
upon the skeletons of cities proud,
to veil them one by one within the shroud
of feeble memory that slowly palls.

We talk of dust and look into the Sun
knowing that even he, though golden-orbed,
must serve relentless Law, must be absorbed
by space—a grain of dust that glimm'ring spun.

Yet Man defies Oblivion. . . . With his dreams
he storms the Gates of Death, intent to prove
his worthiness of Truth that saves, redeems.

To Man mere fate of dust cannot behoove!
Of Light Supreme, we think, we are the beams,
wherein, like dust, creations dance and move.

CLOUDRIDER.

PORTUGAL'S POETIC STAGE

DESPITE the increasing popularity in Portugal, as everywhere else, of talkies, theatrical enterprises in Lisbon are relatively well patronized. The Portuguese are justly proud of their men of letters; in every town, however small, will be found a Praça de Camões (Camões Square), a Rua Almeida Garrett (Garrett Street), and the National Theatre in Lisbon, formerly known as *The Theatre of D. Maria II*, is now called after Almeida Garrett, the founder.

In 1836 Garrett became Inspector of Theatres—a post created after the September Revolution of that year. He had the roughest of material to work upon, but nevertheless he won through—not only initiating a National Theatre, but schooling the actors and providing plays to oust the translations of foreign rubbish that had formerly reigned supreme on the Portuguese stage. Amongst his most interesting dramas is his *Auto de Gil Vicente* produced in 1838, in which history is blended with stagecraft in masterly fashion. Gil Vicente is generally considered to be the first dramatic poet of Portugal and his dates are fixed, though not with complete certainty, as 1465–1536. It was in order to enjoy Vicente's work that Erasmus is supposed to have learnt Portuguese. These writings, inspired by a love of nature, appealed to the romantic leanings of Almeida Garrett, who favoured the national tang in literature. In 1924, Dr. Leite de Vasconcelos published a small volume entitled *Farsa do Alfaiate* (*The Tailor's Farce*). He described it as " one of the oldest pieces of the Portuguese theatre " and it has been mentioned recently by Gustavo de Matos Sequeira in his *Theatre of Other Times* as being, possibly, a much more ancient comedy than the first known dramatic compositions of Gil Vicente. It seems probable, however, that the honour of being the founder of the Portuguese theatre still pertains to Gil Vicente, and that the *Tailor's Farce* was merely a poetical satire in dialogue such as occurs in the *Cancioneiro Geral* of Garcia de Resende (1516). The *Theatre of Other Times*, by the way, is a most readable work for the author carries the interest of the reader with him from mystery plays, *autos* or religious plays down to the completion of the National Theatre in 1846, when it was nicknamed by its detractors *Theatre of the Watercress*, because its foundations were alleged to have been laid on moist soil.

The winter season 1932–33 opened at the National Theatre with a magnificent performance of Almeida Garrett's memorable tragedy *Frei Luis de Sousa*, a work that transcends time and fashion for it is one of the world's classics, and drew tears to the eyes of many members of the audience in November last, just as it did when first performed in 1843 by a mixed company of professionals and amateurs, on which occasion Alexandre Herculano, the famous historian, wept. The subject of *Frei Luis de Sousa* is one that appeals to every patriotic Portuguese for it treats of the return, after twenty years' imprisonment, of D. João de Portugal who had been captured after the Battle of Alcacer-Quibir in Morocco in 1578. On this occasion, D. Sebastião, King of Portugal, was killed by the Mussulmans, though many of his followers imagined he was in hiding and would return to Portugal. The Sebastian legend died hard, the superstitious people believing that the King would appear, to save his country, so that in 1808, when the French menace was rife, an eggshell was supposed to have been discovered containing the letters V.S.R.P. meaning *vem Sebastião Rei Portugês* (there comes Sebastian King of Portugal). In the drama of *Frei Luis de Sousa* the audience learns at once that a shadow hangs over Dona Madalena de Vilhena, wife of Manuel de Sousa. She is haunted by the fear that her first husband, D. João, although believed to have been dead for twenty years, may return. Her terror, her foreboding, grip the onlooker, and when the climax is reached and D. João actually appears, disguised as a pilgrim, the inevitableness of the tragedy, the horror, are as powerfully depicted as in Greek drama. The dénouement is heartrending, Madalena and Manuel become, respectively, nun and monk, their daughter Maria dies of shame to think she is a bastard, while the pilgrim tries to withdraw in order to avert the tragedy, but is too late.

It is largely due to the excellent work of the *Conservatório*, also founded by Almeida Garrett, that the diction of the Portuguese actors is superb and that, when spoken by them, Portuguese becomes as musical, and as expressive as any other Latin language. The cast included Palmira Bastos, Maria Lalande, Antonio Pinheiro, Robles Monteiro, Raul de Carvalho and Antonio Sacramento, great artistes all of them who, in all that they undertake, carry conviction because of their lack of exaggeration and their spontaneity, characteristics enhanced in value by reason of their rarity. Interest in Camões never flags and, recently, there has been a considerable amount of interesting correspondence in the *Diario de Noticias* pertaining to the evergreen subject of the poet and his love affairs. Such discussion is beneficial inasmuch as it focusses attention on books about the poet, and Ricardo Jorge has drawn attention to the posthumous work of Lopes de Mendonça, *A Alma do Trinca-Fortes*, which he describes as a " sketch of the behaviour of the man, and of the artist Camões, the real, the true, free from all conventions and pose." Mr. Jorge's further remark that " once and for all it is necessary that the life of Camões should cease to be encircled by falsehood and futility " applies equally well to many another man of letters.

During 1932 thirty-three original Portuguese plays were produced, in addition to nineteen translations, the latter, by the way, included an adaptation of Somerset Maugham's *Cyclone*. One of the most prolific of the Portuguese playwrights and adapters is Lino Ferreira, a magnetic personality, much sought after because of his scintillating humour. A shrewd and artistic producer, he has translated sixty foreign pieces, has written five or six original works, and is one of the most brilliant critics in Portugal. At a luncheon given recently by the Association of Dramatic and Musical Criticism, in honour of the famous actress Adelina Abranches, the modern poetess D. Fernanda de Castro explained her project of launching a *New Theatre* to produce plays by young authors and to give the working classes opportunities of attending high-class performances free of charge, so that educative drama may be within reach of all in Lisbon as it is to-day in Russia. She has aroused much sympathy for her enterprise and the development will be interesting to watch. The President of the Association, Antonio Ferro, in a witty speech, summarized the aims of the young society, and emphasized that the organization was setting a fine example of *esprit de corps* by uniting the words *association* and *criticism* that are usually as opposed to each other as the poles.

At the present time, much interest is being aroused in Lisbon in Brazilian literature owing to the presence in the Portuguese capital of many refugees from S. Paulo. Amongst the writers whom the political upheavals have brought to Portugal is Guilherme de Almeida, the leader of the Brazilian literary and artistic revival initiated some ten years ago in S. Paulo. In his poem *Raça*, published in 1925, he celebrated the three elements that constitute the make-up of Brazilian nationality—Portuguese, Indian and Negro. It is one of the first works of importance published in Brazil characterized by a peculiar national flavour. In an interview which was reported recently in the journal *Ilustração*, Guilherme de Almeida referred to his *Cantar dos Cantares* upon which he is now engaged, and in which he commemorates the evolution of the Brazilian language in a series of poems assimilating the styles of various epochs, and envisages the language of the future, in accordance with the various influences now at work.

Carnaval, a period of jollification, of relief from dull care, that is scarcely heeded in England, is still celebrated in Portuguese theatres with much verve, and the Carnaval programme at the National Theatre was of real interest and intrinsic value, inasmuch as it afforded the leading actors of the day opportunity for proving themselves quite as capable in comic as in tragic rôles.

To a member of The Poetry Society, one who, in accordance with the aims of that body, believes in the encouragement of the here-and-now poets, it is a pleasure to note that present-day Portuguese poets receive at least a certain modicum of encouragement both in the press and by private initiative. Fernando Pequito, who recently published a volume of verse entitled *Cravos Rubros* (*Red Carnations*) has been hailed as one of the future great ones, while Silva Tavares, a poet from the province of Altentejo, south of the Tagus, was honoured recently by a festival at which his works were both declaimed and sung.

Salazar, the man of the moment in Portugal, the head of the Government, who, during the few years that he has been in office, has performed the seemingly impossible—making Portugal one of the most prosperous countries in Europe—acknowledged in interviews with Antonio Ferro, now published in book form, that the subsidy of theatre and opera, the encouragement of art, the preservation of Portugal's artistic patrimony are all subjects to receive attention, and ever-increasing attention, in the near future, while the reconstruction of archæological and historical monuments, temples, castles, museums, is already proceeding apace.

Mont Estorie, Portugal. E. ROSENTHAL.

POET'S FAITH

IF we break faith with the world,
And snap the sinews of song,
Then what is the voice of man
To utter the heart's wrong
No more than the pitiful note
Of a starling's riven tongue?

To harvests of some new heaven
Our winnowing hands grope,
The bread of the world in breaking
Forswear beyond their scope,
And still in fragile baskets
Treasure the crumbs of hope.

If men break faith with us,
What is the lonely call
To the face of a star in the sky
That hangs above us all
To comfort the feet that bleed,
And the human eyes that fall?

KEN ETHERIDGE.

ON MILTON

("*My light is spent*")

A DREAMING youth upon the banks of Cam,
Listening to far-off flutes,
Wind-borne, that sang the pensive airs of grief,
Or showered notes of joy like scattered sheaf
Of blossoms ; lord of perfect words that bent
To do his will, matched with his mind's intent ;
How hardened such a one
To a politic drone
Riveting upon his soul
The straitened armour of a zealous sham ?

Stifled and nigh to death his spirit lay,
But quivering still, when fate
Stretched forth her hand that mighty soul to save.
She bound a night-hued veil, dense as the grave,
Athwart his eyes, that he should walk alone,
Henceforth, in darkness, garish hopes foredone ;
Hearing the muted strain
Of mystic notes again ;
With an inly turning gaze
Swift to discern the seraphs' wingèd way.

DORIS MAJOR.

CRUCIFIX

WHAT are these limbs that scarcely keep from falling?
What is this crowd around us as we go ?
These shoulders that the weight of me is galling,
Why do they stoop so low ?

Why have they cut me from my forest splendour ?
What is this ageless unrepentant feud
Against a heart that glories to surrender
To the blind multitude ?

Why have I loved the world, so to forsake it ?
—Great was the peace beneath the boughs of me—
Why do they take the loveliest and break it,
While all the rest go free ?

K. V. CHEVIS.

NIGHT-OWL

AGAIN on silent wing I search
For harbourage. Where shall I perch?
This dim, secluded barn is best;
Here flies no bird to break my rest;
No ray of sun, however fierce,
The lovely peaceful gloom can pierce.
And here shall no insipid scent
Of flowers come, but odours blent
Of flittering moth and furtive mouse.
Here contentedly I drowse,
Till the gnawing hunger-pain
Calls me back to life again.
I emerge, to see the shadows
Covering the woods and meadows,
Where I wander like a ghost,
By the rising moon disclosed;
Or a changeling child that earth,
With darkness wedded, brings to birth.
The sombre passion of my cry
Flings a challenge to the sky:
All the triumph, torment, thrill,
Of the hunting—and the kill.

KATHERINE PARKER.

NIGHT SHADOWS

NIGHT shadows softly fall,
Closely they're creeping
Where thou art sleeping.
Ah, could I be
As close as they and have thee in my keeping,
But sleep,—and in thy dreaming dream of me.

When comes a day that thou,
This earth forsaking,
Thy way art taking
To where may be
A dream-time twixt the sleeping and the waking,
Then dream—and in thy dreaming dream of me.

IDA MARGARET MILLS.

UMBRELLA MEN WITH BOWLER HATS

UMBRELLA men with bowler hats
And little white spats,
Deep-stomached men with gold watch-chains
And varicose veins.
Why should you—tho' you're backbone of the land—be each jack one the same ?
Why such a drab and dreary regiment and why so dreadfully tame ?

Tight-lipped men with crochety faces
And shuffling paces,
Striped-trousered men with elaborate clocks
Embossing your socks,
Say—what disease of mind makes you believe that this peculiar dress
Enhances your prestige—that well-placed tie-pins bring you business ?

Slow-thinking but quick-eating men
All swollen when
At paltry victim clients you glower
In imagined power.
Fools—for to-day far East one man commands ten million souls with broth
For nourishment, his roof the mango leaf, his dress—a loin-cloth !

P. BETHELL.

I HAVE SEEN

I HAVE seen a shadow lie on snow . . .
Silent . . . drear . . . and gray.
It seemed I could not move . . .
Or speak . . .
Or turn my eyes away.

Its form
Held likeness of the day
You left . . . when life grew bleak . . .
So white . . . so cold.
A shadow on the snow seems warm.

MARY CUMMINGS EUDY.

EMILY BRONTË

(*Resurgam !*)

SILENT and self-supporting as a peak,
Snow-clad, snow-bound, remote, aloof, alone,
Whose fair and dazzling summit was a throne
Ascended only by the mild and meek :
Henceforth the judges of the earth will speak
Of thee, as one to fame and honour known,
On whose bleak path with briars and hemlock sown,
Rise red posthumous blossoms, fair to seek.

In public joys, when beacon fires are lit,
The valleys gleam, the gliding rivers shine :
Save, haply, for a pool in copse of pine,
That lights but when a dreamer visits it :
So, round a rush-lit board thy lovers sit,
And drink to thee thy late-discovered wine.

I. SUTHERLAND GROOM.

THIS BY COMPARISON

I LOVED a princess in a fairy tale
Once, when I was a child ;
And I turned sick and pale,
I shed the bitterest breathless tears, grew wild
With grief, because I could not touch her hand,
Could never, though I were to run and climb
And swim broad seas, make narrower the space
That stretcht between myself and fairyland,
Draw one whit nearer once-upon-a-time.

This by comparison is not hopeless love ;
I sometimes after savage bursts of pain
Recall those childish tears, feel sharp delight
To think that I shall see your face again—
Have seen, shall see, your face,
That you are real, are true,
And I could very well, that very night,
If I so willed, arise and go to you.

N. K. CRUICKSHANK.

WAGNER AND BURNS

[The author, Margarete Driesch, is the wife of the noted German philosopher Professor Hans Driesch, of the University of Leipzig, who has been guest-professor in Great Britain, America, Uruguay, Argentina, China and Japan. She accompanied him on his travels.]

While I was in Tokio with my husband some years ago the wife of a Japanese diplomat asked me where our home was in Germany. This was a somewhat unusual question, for people in other countries generally take it for granted that all Germans come from Berlin. But this Japanese woman knew Germany better, for when I told her that we lived in Leipzig, she responded: "Oh, yes, I know. The city of furs, books and a fair." However, she knew nothing about our Leipzig musical life, and I had to tell her about it, as I now want to tell others. For Leipzig's musical history goes back many centuries.

The year 1933 brings the 50th anniversary of Richard Wagner's death. Doubtless many readers do not know that he was born in Leipzig on May 22nd, 1813, in the "White and Red Lion," an old house, which unfortunately had to make way in the 'eighties for a new building, at the entrance to the "Brühl," the street which, as no other, is of importance for the city's business life, for the fur trade has had its centre here for many generations.

Wagner's father, a highly educated man who was a municipal official, with the title "Polizeiamts-Aktuarius," died only six months after Richard's birth. His widow married Ludwig Geyer, who was a kind step-father to the boy and his elder sisters. But he, too, died at forty-two in Dresden, whither the family had moved after the death of Richard's father. The boy, then eight years old, thus became fatherless for the second time. From then on, with brief interruptions, he lived in Leipzig with Adolf Wagner, his father's brother, an elderly, well-to-do bachelor who devoted himself to the literary and artistic movements of his day and was on a friendly footing with many intellectual leaders, among them Schiller and Goethe.

Adolf Wagner issued the first edition in English of Robert Burns' complete works. He lived in a baroque palace on the market, the so-called Königshaus, one of the most beautiful houses in Leipzig, in which the royal family stayed when visiting the city. The boy Richard had one of the staterooms for his quarters. In his "Lebensbeichte" (Confessions) he wrote later that he liked the room, with its silk-upholstered furniture dating from the days of King August the Strong, but did not like to sleep alone in his vast bed under pictures of court beauties in powdered coiffures. These pictures appeared like ghosts at night.

From 1828 to 1830 we find Wagner a pupil of the Nikolai Gymnasium in his native city of Leipzig, and from 1830 to 1831 of the Thomas School, after having earlier attended the Kreuzschule in Dresden. During his last years in the Gymnasium he also received private instruction in counterpoint and harmony from two Leipzig teachers of music—Müller and Weinling. The latter was organist of the Thomas Church, that is, one of the successors of Johann Sebastian Bach. Wagner thus had a good musical foundation when he matriculated at the University of Leipzig as music student. But in 1833 he left the city to accept a position as coach in a Würzburg theatre. After another short stay in Leipzig he became Kapellmeister, or leader of the orchestra, in the Magdeburg Municipal Theatre.

Wagner's " Wanderjahre " now began, during which he came to Leipzig only occasionally on visits, where his mother, who had ten children from her two marriages, now lived at an advanced age. His two sisters, Ottilie and Luise, the latter once a charming actress, were both married in Leipzig with members of the well known Brockhaus family of publishers. Wagner's best friend in Leipzig was Theodor Apel, a poet and son of a wealthy aristocratic family. He played an important rôle in the composer's younger years, frequently helping him financially, and acting as a steadying influence for the temperamental young man. One of Wagner's important musical contemporaries was Robert Schumann, who came from his native city of Zwickau in Saxony to Leipzig to study, and met there, in the person of the daughter of his teacher, Wieck, his future wife, Clara Schumann-Wieck, later to become a noted pianist.

Wagner's early works were well received, but his grand operas won favour very slowly in Leipzig, as was the case everywhere. Not until the second half of the century did they score a complete success, especially when Angelo Neumann, manager of the Leipzig Opera and himself an enthusiastic admirer of Wagner, entered the lists for them. The State Opera will give a complete cycle of Wagner's operas, with noted guest-conductors and guest-soloists. The city will hold throughout the summer an exhibition in the Municipal Historical Museum (old Rathaus) of Wagneriana from its own extensive collection and of articles lent by private persons. The State Conservatory of Music will honour the anniversary with a special concert, probably on Wagner's birthday.

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The Bodley Head has published in their new series of popular biographies at five shillings net André Maurois's masterly life of Lord Byron. The book, which is over 400 pages in length, is fully illustrated and is bound in buckram with gold lettering. The review in THE POETRY REVIEW by the Rev. R. Fotheringham will be recalled.

Dorothy Una Ratcliffe has achieved a reputation for her interpretation of the spirit of Yorkshire in prose and verse. A small selected volume of her poetry of the Yorkshire Dales has been published by the Bodley Head under the title of *Dale Courtin'*. It includes some new work as well as poems from her published work and is issued at 1s. 6d. in the hope that her work may be within the reach of the Dale folk themselves.

POETS AND POLITICS

THERE is no doubt that Cecil Day Lewis is one of the most remarkable of our younger poets. His important work dates from 1929 when he published *Transitional Poem*, a work which, as THE POETRY REVIEW said at the time, showed very great promise. The book was generally neglected, but it was followed two years later by *From Feathers to Iron*, a sequence of poems which has steadily gained recognition and which remains one of the three outstanding books of the last two years. Its significance is derived from the fact that its lyricism depends not on isolated perceptions of beauty in hyacinths or stream-lined motor cars, but rather on a new and enthusiastic attitude to life in general. It contains none of the pessimism and weariness reflected in the work of his immediate predecessors. Not that Mr. Day Lewis—or Mr. Auden or Mr. Spender who adopt a similar attitude—is a fatuous or frivolous optimist : he is deadly serious and he believes that the whole state of society is the concern of the poet. He can see that things are in a bad way—that the debasement of public taste, the lowering of the standard of living, the vulgarization of literature, proceed steadily from year to year. The " economic crisis " he would say, is only the latest phase of this process. But he believes, with the Communist, that there is no way out of this difficulty except the abolition of industrial production for private profit, and he believes that the situation is so bad that the change must come soon.

This definite political creed has given a new and vigorous impetus to poetry. Mr. Day Lewis, like Mr. Auden or Mr. Spender, can write with the enthusiasm of a Shelley, not for the world as it is, but for the world which they believe is being born.

You may say that the merit of the poetry has nothing to do with the merit of the politics and that great poetry may as well be written from a position of defeatism and despair as from one of courage and hope. That is probably true, but the important thing about this new attitude is the work it produces—work which has qualities of enthusiasm and vigour long absent from English poetry. In Mr. Day Lewis we notice not pale imitations and feeble rearrangements of Shelley or the earlier Wordsworth, but a life and spirit which is theirs. *From Feathers to Iron* was remarkable because it was conceived and could be read as a sequence of poems on the conception and birth of either an actual child or a new state. There is no need to discuss the technical means which made it possible for Mr. Day Lewis to communicate with accuracy and vigour his own feelings : they were examined at length when *From Feathers to Iron* was reviewed in these pages.

The new volume *The Magnetic Mountain* (Hogarth Press, 3s. 6d.) is necessarily a disappointment to those who enjoyed the shock of discovering on reading the earlier books. Because it has no private, personal legend, it lacks the integrity of *From Feathers to Iron* : its development is not inevitable and it seems to have been written at various times and pieced together later (parts of it appeared in *New Signatures* and *New Country*).

Mr. Day Lewis is a remarkable craftsman: he has done much to develop the technical resources of the poet and he has been as quick to learn from others as they have been to learn from him. Thus when he ends his book:

> Beckon O beacon, and O sun be soon!
> Hollo, bells, over a melting earth!
> Let man be many and his sons all sane,
> Fearless with felons, handsome by the hearth.
> Break from your trance: start dancing now in town,
> And, fences down, the plouding match with mate.
> This is your day, so turn, my comrades, turn
> Like infants' eyes like sun flowers to the light,

there are lines which remind the reader of Mr. Andrew's poems, and others (the last, for example) which suggest Mr. Spender's. Mr. Day Lewis may well have been the inventor of these assonances and these images, but his invention sometimes exceeds his power of integrating his devices into a unified poem.

Nevertheless, *The Magnetic Mountain* is a book not to be missed. The satire, perhaps, will not sting any except those who already have some slight doubt of the absolute disinterestedness of newspaper-barons and the perfect equity of the social system:

> Fireman and farmer, father and flapper,
> I'm speaking to you, sir, please drop that paper;
> Don't you know its poison? Have you lost all hope?
> Aren't you ashamed, ma'am, to be taking dope?
> There's a nasty habit that starts in the head
> And creeps through the veins till you go all dead:
> Insured against accident? But that won't prove
> Much use when one morning you find you can't move.

But there are memorable phrases in these satiric sections (satiric is scarcely the word, Mr. Day Lewis understands too well and sympathizes too much with those whom he satirizes):—

> Let us now praise famous men,
> Not your earth-shakers, not the dynamiters,
> But who in the Home Counties or the Khyber,
> Trimming their nails to meet an ill wind,
> Facing the Adversary with a clean collar,
> Justified the system.

It was, perhaps, bound to happen: there was too much fundamental decency in the English public school system and too much genuine sense of social responsibility in the class-consciousness of our upper class, for them to become completely the servants of Big Business. Some were bound to rebel, but it is remarkable that the rebellion (which is becoming so noticeable at our older universities) should produce such poets as Mr. Day Lewis. And some of his poems, especially that which begins :

> You that love England, who have an ear for her music,
> The slow movement of clouds in benediction,
> Clear arias of light thrilling over her uplands,
> Over the chords of summer sustained peacefully ;
> Ceaseless the leave's counterpoint in a west wind lively,
> Blossom and river rippling loveliest allegro,
> And the storms of wood, strings, brass at year's finale :
> Listen. Can you not heart the entrance of a new theme ?

prove that his beliefs, even though they may never produce that bettering of the world for which he, like all decent people, lives and works, nevertheless give sustenance and inspiration to some of the finest and most genuine patriotic poetry which has been written in the English language.

Mr. Roy Campbell is a poet with a remarkable mastery of traditional form. He too is a poet in revolt against the present state of society, but unlike Mr. Day Lewis he does not see any prospect of remedy, therefore both his satires and his lyrics are isolated fragments. His new volume, *Flowering Reeds* (Boriswood, 5s.) contains some of his finest lyrics ; notably *The Gum Trees* and *Choosing a Mast* which have already appeared as Ariel Poems. Mr. Campbell's work is a practical refutation of the extremist argument that it is impossible to make poetry of the old " poetic " subjects—but it should be remembered that this argument is one which is never really advanced : it is a turnip-ghost raised by those who wish to discredit the men who aim at some extension of the scope of poetry. Mr. Campbell himself is a poet whose work delights both the right and left wings, and there are passages in this new book in which he is at his best and produces, even though using familiar metres and a well-known vocabulary, patterns in which the verbal music intensifies the vivid visual image :

> Along the cold grey torrent of the sky
> Where branch the fatal trophies of his brows,
> Actæon, antlered in the wintry boughs,
> Rears to the stars his mastiff-throttled cry.

For the conservative, as for the innovator, there are specific dangers —" the cold grey torrent of the sky " comes near to cliché—but in general Mr. Campbell magnificently escapes and in his best poems—*The Gum Trees*, for example (which owes a great deal to M. Valéry's *Cantique des Colonnes*)—his rhetoric is very fine indeed.

" Verse,"(say Mr. Clifford Bax in the introduction to his collected poems *Farewell My Muse* (Lovat Dickson, 8s. 6d.), " that was once an art of general interest, is now, like archery, the concern of a very small minority." There is some justice in the complaint though the legend of an Elizabethan England compact of dairymaids and 'prentices all panting-eager for the latest miscellany or answer to the rhymes is romantic twaddle. But those who complain are always the older writers, the men who have helped to create the situation which Hazlitt foresaw and of which they now complain. The younger men, Auden, Day Lewis, Spender, Goodman, are content to get on with the double job of recovering the lost ground and removing the social and economic causes of the debasement of public taste. "Hundreds of young men and women," continues Mr. Clifford Bax "write verse for a year or two, and then destroy it and forget it : though probably, in these these days of greater sexual opportunity, there is much less juvenile verse than there used to be." Was there ever a wilder conjecture ? Suppose that these *are* days of greater sexual opportunity (and Heaven knows that what with the housing shortage and the cost of living and the difficulty of getting a job, thousands of young people are kept apart), even so, what difference does it make ? Does Mr. Clifford Bax imagine that verse-writing is a substitute for lovemaking ? If he does, no young poet would agree with him. It is perfectly true that the period of life at which the sensibility of most people is at its highest is that when they are most liable to "fall in love." But the poetry, good or bad, is a concomitant of the love making, successful or unsuccessful, not a consequence. You cannot profitably discuss these subjects whilst you ignore the work of psychologists who have given their lives to them and, in a preface to a volume of verse, this reckless speculation is a dangerous preliminary. It leads the reader to expect to find the work of a lazy mind and inferior sensibility. One is tempted to quote some of Mr. Bax's worse didactic verses and leave them to speak for themselves :

Meaning. . . . ? No more than this :
   Life is a weary way.
Will God rebuke His lover
   For shortening it with play ?

Apart from the merit of the statement altogether (and Mr. Bax must know as well as anybody that it is a dishonest simplification of a complicated problem) the question has gained nothing from being written in verse form. Any boy trained to write Latin verses can churn out that sort of stuff by the yard.

But it is unfair to chose the weak spots in this book of collected poems. It is the kind of unfairness of which Mr. Bax is himself quite guilty when he writes :

Let those who trust to science look with care
Lest from that maze they never come forth free.
Does the bird-catcher hope to catch the air,
Or does the fisherman try to net the sea ?

There may be a few pre-war third-class honours graduates in Chemistry almost capable of such stupidity, but if Mr. Bax is going to write about science he might be expected to read Whitehead, Eddington or Levy as representative scientists. Or he might go back to Karl Pearson (or Laplace or Aristotle) and discover what *is* the scientific tradition in these things. These hypothetical trappers of the absolute don't exist, and so as a piece of moralizing the verse wasn't worth writing, and anyway, the poetic juice of the imaginary situation had been extracted long ago by Tennyson:

> Hold thou the good: define it well:
> For fear divine Philosophy
> Should push beyond her mark, and be
> Procuress to the Lords of Hell.

But Mr. Bax, as we have said, does himself an injustice in attracting our attention to this aspect of his work. In general it is certainly underestimated in comparison with, shall we say, that of Mr. J. C. Squire (to whom he pays a generous tribute) and this book should not only be read by those who wish to have a reasonably complete knowledge of the poetry of the pre-war years, but also by all those who are interested in fine workmanship. For Mr. Bax, when he lays aside his rather cheap prophetic mantle, is an accurate observer of things and people: he has a sharp eye for a landscape and he can paint the landscape in words. And that power to evoke a *specific* instead of a *general* image marks him off from the horde of poetasters who have tried their hands at his subjects.

M. R.

Youth and Maturity in New Verse

Two interesting first volumes of poetry come from Oxford, *The Man of Gingerbread*, by Alistair William Rowsell Miller (Blackwell, 3s. 6d.) and *Poems*, by J. C. L. Mellersh (Blackwell, 2s. 6d.), a scholar of Shrewsbury College, who met with a tragic accident last year, and died at the age of seventeen.

Mr. Miller is experimental and stimulating and uneven. He translates from the Latin and from mediaeval French poetry, sensitively aware of the meaning of the words, and catching occasionally something of the feeling or flavour of the original, that elusive something which dances just out of reach of the plodding translator. He finds the beauty of the world an exciting thing, and more exciting in that other poets have found it so before, and enriched it with their praise. Unlike many poets of to-day, he is not at odds with the universe. The consciousness of an essential harmony and rhythm and purpose in the world underlies his poetry, implicit although almost (but not quite) getting itself expressed in the series "Virginia Remembered" —the best of his work. Mr. Miller has a refreshing lightness of touch, a feeling for pattern in poetry, sensitiveness and just a suggestion of that something more by which he might achieve the fusing and co-ordination and harmonizing of these still scattered qualities.

Mr. Mellersh is more direct and deliberate in manner, and, paradoxically, while less imitative than Mr. Miller, less individual also. His poetry shows a considerable sense of words and some feeling for atmosphere. Perhaps his poems tend to be a little over-deliberate, as if the emotion that prompted them had been stifled by the cares of composition ; but this is a fault which at least safeguards against the slipshod or the superficial. There is a robustness and a grace about the best of his work, and in all the poems scattered lines occur which in themselves are good enough to lift Mr. Mellersh's verse above the mediocre.

New Country (The Hogarth Press, 7s. 6d.) is an anthology of prose and verse by the authors of *New Signatures*, that is all, or nearly all, the contributors are young men not old enough to have fought in the War. Mr. Michael Roberts, the editor, has collected the stories and articles and verse that make up the volume as " a picture of something that is happening." Mr. Roberts believes that very few people are interested in literature simply as literature. " Nearly all of us want one team rather than another to win." (The teams in this case are, of course, the various political parties, and Mr. Roberts does not jib at calling his own party the revolutionaries.) This is an attitude which has certainly not applied to literature in the past. Perhaps it will become general in the future. One cannot help hoping not. However, this point of view, which is precisely the opposite to that which Virginia Woolf expounded so wittily in *A Room of One's Own*, is excellently illustrated in the collection which follows, which includes such authors as C. Day Lewis, G. F. Brett, Stephen Spender, T. O. Beachcroft and Michael Roberts himself. It is noteworthy, however, that T. O. Beachcroft's two sketches, which are outstandingly good, go to disprove Mr. Roberts' " teams " theory by being some of the very few un-class-conscious contributions in the book.

Of three books from Macmillan's, *Mournful Numbers* by Colin Ellis (5s.), *Many Moods*, by E. J. Pratt, (7s. 6d.), and *Signpost*, by Dorothy Livesay (7s. 6d.), the first is definitely satirical verse, the second ranges from a jauntiness that resembles Leigh Hunt, in " The Depression Ends," to a seriousness that is reminiscent of James Stephens, in " To an Enemy," while the third is entirely serious and subjective. Mr. Ellis is well known as a contributor to many periodicals ; his clever versification helps to make his satires bite clean and deep, such, for instance as the epigram on " The Modern World " :

Science finds out ingenious ways to kill
Strong men, and keep alive the weak and ill,
That these a sickly progeny may breed :
Too poor to tax, too numerous to feed.

Mr. Pratt is perhaps best known as the author of *The Roosevelt and the Antinoe*." His verse is of that virile sincere quality that can hold the reader and satisfy him. " A Reverie on a Dog " is one of the best poems of its kind, and " The Sea-Cathedral " is a magnificent picture of an iceberg:

Vast and immaculate! No pilgrim bands
In ecstasy before the Parian Shrines
Knew such a temple built by human hands
With this transcendent rhythm in its lines.
Like an epic on the north Atlantic stream
It moved, and fairer than a Phidian dream.

Rich gifts unknown to kings were duly brought
At dawn and sunset and at cloudless noons,
Gifts from the sea-gods and the sun who wrought
Cascades and rainbows; flung them in festoons
Over the spires, with emerald, amethyst,
Sapphire and pearl out of their fiery mist.

And music followed when a litany,
Begun with the ring of foam bells and the purl
Of linguals as the edges cut the sea,
Crashed upon a rising storm with whirl
Of floes from far-off spaces where Death rides
The darkened belfries of the evening tides.

Within the sunlight, vast, immaculate!
Beyond all reach of earth in majesty,
It passed on Southwards slowly to its fate—
To be drawn down by the inveterate sea,
Without one chastening fire made to start
From altars built around its polar heart.

Miss Livesay handles her verses well, but she is too interested in her own reactions to things to be able to share them fully with her readers. " I Saw My Thought " is typical of her methods :

I saw my thought a hawk
Through heaven fly :
On earth my words were shadow of
His wings, his cry.

How many clouded days
Precede the fair—
When thought must unrecorded pass
Through sunless air.

Mr. Humbert Wolfe's *Reverie of Policeman*, a Ballet in 3 acts (Gollancz, 7s. 6d.), like Mr. Wallace B. Nichols' *Prometheus in Piccadilly*, is a phantasy centred on the trend of modern life, and it only needed the rather curious presentment as a kind of cord on which to hang the phylacteries of his poetic thought. In the preliminary synopsis of events he says that: "Policeman is chosen as chorus and commentary of the ballet because there is essential humanity in the simplicities of law and order. . . . In what is a phantasy of love triumphing over itself, and as such disdaining space and time, he supplies in all his embodiments the judgment and reassurance of the normal." But he is not the only commentator, for each character supplies his own testimony to the theme in which he takes part . . . first-love manifesting itself, called into question by the world's satire and science, but only injured by jealousy. The jealous one destroys his own soul, and the satirical poet evokes a distorted muse, Cacaphone, with her jazz music, political absurdities, robots, and jackals of despair. But through the insistent sound of a fountain which is "the cool movement of verse" she gradually changes into Euterpe, saying to the poet,

The poet is not his own. In part he is
a stone in the sand in which race-memories
are deeply scored in time-blurred cuniform
yet with the heat of all lost beauty warm.
In part he is a listener in a trance
to a further horn than broke the heart of France
when to his Tower in Spain Childe Rolande came.
There love is quiet; there knowledge has no name;
there beauty veils her eyes with her own wings;
and there, as is the use of crownèd kings,
with balsam poured from high his spirit stands
sealed to the light with the laying on of hands.
Spokesman for all those inarticulate,
the blind and dumb antagonists of Fate,
he has their hoarded wealth of patient wrong
for the unmeasured hinterland of his song. . . .

The poet begins writing the preliminary to his new play—seven sonnets—but they are enough to show that truth and beauty have triumphed. At the end, as at the beginning,

Policeman at the end of street
meditates upon his beat,
except for cats engaged upon
casual conversation
there's naught in sight of any kind
to occupy his legal mind.

Here are five books of verse from Elkin Matthews, all at 3s. 6d—*Collected Poems*, by Mr. Justice Sampson; *Minerva's Owl*, by Bayard

Simmons; *Chasing the Rainbow*, by R. C. Thomas; *Praise, a Tale of Knowledge*, by K. W. Monsarrat; *John at Charterhouse*, by Ivor F. Gibson.

Mr. Justice Sampson has published his verse from time to time under the pen-name of John Doe. They show admirable qualities of feeling, restraint, vigour and courage. "Ode to Dawn" has many fine passages, such as:—

You, the quick-mowing harvester of night,
Reap all her shadows, swathe her fear,
And to the monstrous dark
Heavy with baleful ear
Your sickle bring. . . .

while "Life is our Scene" is epigrammatic in its terseness:

Life is our scene.
To vex the unknowable grave
With question when the rounded orb of heaven
Illumes with glorious light the wakening plain,
And all the seraphim of God
From bush and brake burst forth in song,
To me seems ill
—Whose heart is prone to disobey.

Mr. Bayard Simmons gives us the quality of wit with clever versification, particularly in the title poem, which begins:

The wisest fowl that ever clucked
Was Dame Minerva's owl;
He was of all celestial birds
The most sagacious fowl;
Upon her shoulder he would perch,
If ancient tales be true,
And whisper in the lady's ear
And tell her what to do;
And if she did not always act
Upon that sage advice,
He held his peace and never gave
The same opinion twice.

Miss R. C. Thomas is excellent in her descriptive pieces. Her "St. Lucia" is treated with individuality instead of the generalizations that in many writers makes a description applicable to almost any locality:

Twin Pitons, brooding in their royal blue,
Confront a troubled sky of angry gold.
The moon has whispered legends that of old
Solon first heard and Plato held as true—
Sad tales of lost Atlantis. What if anew
Their old aggressor, ocean, glide to enfold

Them unsuspecting ? or, grown yet more bold,
With a sudden onrush, rob them of their due ?
For, as of old, the flood still seeks to gain
By force, by guile, what the land holds in fee :
Battling or sporting with the fringing main,
Hoping that which hath been again may be.
What though Antilla boasts her island chain ?
Atlantis slumbers far beneath the sea.

In her longer " The Goblet of Husain Mirza " the analogies and purpose of the poem grow confused.

Mr. K. W. Monsarrat writes a rather unusual philosophical poem and attributes all the enlightenment it endeavours to set forth to the sympathy and companionship of someone else, though the poem seems more full of questioning than of praise or knowledge. The thought is often arresting, but the diction remains somewhat pedestrian, even in the best passages ; for example :

I listened to you when you spoke of peace.
Peace was a gift and not to be contrived
Nor came for asking, only to be had
And held within the hand along the way
To further places. Why came it ever ?
Whence came it ? Why to those receiving it ?

Mr. Gibson also writes on a sustained theme. He traces a boy's impressions and emotions as his character develops at a public school. The experience can hardly be other than personal, so intimate is it, and one that has been cherished in the memory and enriched by contemplation. The language is more significant than that of the preceding poem and of more emotional power, yet, as a whole, the significance of the poem does not penetrate to the outsider, one who has not shared the environment and outlook of such an education. The quoted lines are from the portion entitled " A Race " :

Then died the voices. In the luminous scene,
The tension tightened till the pistol's crack
Sounded like tension breaking. Down the track
The runners sped, like a chord struck suddenly.
And inch by inch the interwoven bunch
Of arms and legs and breaking lungs grew thin
And thinner till dear victory claimed her own.
And on the ground, like gull's on windy shore,
Lay the spent runners in the freshening breeze.

A very small pamphlet of verse, *Ad Interim*, by E.R.D. (Stockwell, 6d.) shows a writer sensitive to the high use of words, though she has not yet attained to the mastery that bends them always to her purpose. Here is her poem written to John Masefield—" A Worker." :

Oblivious as
A ship that ploughs some lone, uncharted sea,
Her sky-sails lost in the dim stars' expanse,
Her pilot of tough-fibred soul and free
From craven doubt or mawkish dalliance;
Or as a mountaineer from the peak's maze
Upon the resilient net
Of the vale's upstretching roads,
Marks with his slow and comprehensive gaze
All the great things and trivial that pass;

Most surely he
Whose course ran now with stars concomitant,
Now in remote and secret depths apart,
Or in the noontide 'mid the roar and rant
Of the insistent world's discordant mart;
Whose life still leaps, flame-like, from Being's source,
Has loved this earth, there yet
Finds self fulfilment, feels
In each spur of his spirit's primal force,
Hot joy of conflict *usque ad aras*.

It is not every writer who can sustain the freshness and interest of his theme in a sequence of 42 sonnets. That the author of *The Poor Poet and the Beautiful Lady*, Alan D. Mickle (Jervis Manton, Melbourne) can do so is a surety in itself for the quality of his verse. He is versatile also and can turn to racy slang or delicate lyrics with equal ease and veracity. "One Sometimes Wonders," shows a good handling of words and a known suffering underlying them:

One sometimes wonders—when the spring winds blow,
And the stars twinkle o'er the scented street
Whence the man hastens, with being all aglow,
The lovely lady of his dreams to meet—
One sometimes wonders—when all things are such,
Which—the greater, sweeter heaven does know—
The woman, telling the man she loves him so much,
Or the man listening, whilst she tells him so.

But when old winter comes and bright flowers go,
And no stars shine, and under the man's feet
The dead leaves scatter, as, deliberately slow,
He goes, the woman he once loved, to meet—
One sometimes wonders, and one's heart grows sore,
Which—now the greater, crueller hell does know—
The man telling the woman he loves her no more,
Or the woman listening, whilst he tells her so.

A CHIVALROUS GENTLEMAN

The Collected Verses of Sir Henry Slesser from the Red Lion Press very pleasingly reveal the lighter moments of a learned judge. We use the term, learned judge, as companion to his own apostrophe to the "chaste muse" (herein, perhaps, lurks a claw of criticism). Not all the poems, however, are based on happy call-backs of lighter hours. "The Judge" has a fine manly dignity in its lines.

When I am come to yield my testament,
With all my learning lost to memory,
And withered robe to serve for cerement,
Let this petition be my threnody:
That, if in old Report, through terms long spent,
Authority still hold for my decree,
I go to final judgment in content
Who sought to spell thy Justice faithfully.

To his endeavour have I bent my mind,
Holding myself aloof from care and praise,
From all things severed; parted from my kind,
Lest, being man, I walked in human ways.—
So have I ended; so I pass alone
From my last cause and solitary throne.

The greater number of the verses dwell with a lingering delight on remembered streams and moorlands, and the "tumbled chasing sea," while closely interwoven with these recalled joys runs a thread of chivalrous devotion to the lady of his love:—"You, who have shared my joys and fear, To me, you are for ever young." And Sir Henry is an accurate observer but we could wish that the lady of his constancy had not been clothed in "chiffon or shantung," the older poet's "When as in silks my Julia goes"—has a more pleasing vagueness in the matter of millinery.

"Death" is on a severer plane, and the last three lines strike a more original note.

—With broken song and withered hope they go
Down to deep caverned chambers and are kissed
By your sad lips to earth: Gaunt Humorist!

It is only the courageous worker in life that greets our last great foe as a Gaunt Humorist. The public, avid for novelty, may not very much relish these poems, but that is scarcely dis-praise.

SOME COMMENDABLE ANTHOLOGISTS

Aspects of Seventeenth Century Verse, selected and prefaced by Peter Quennell (Jonathan Cape, 6s.) is a collection which might be regarded as a sort of personal comment on the intensive anthologies reviewed in our last issue—*The Oxford Book of Sixteenth Century Verse* and *A Collection of English Poems from* 1660 *to* 1800. The basis of Mr. Quennell's selection is primarily a captivating personal enthusiasm, not an attempt at a strictly representative selection from a period so many-sided that it almost inevitably defeats the attempt. His anthology is the more interesting in that it is individual. Mr. Quennell divides the book into lyrical, metaphysical and devotional verse, and prefaces each section by a really excellent foreword which fulfils what should be, but is often not, the first aim of a preface—to hurry on the reader with a heightening of expectation to the poetry itself. Mr. Quennell is a stimulating commentator, who throws out a variety of suggestions in a persuasively off-hand manner. When touching on the marked love of music among seventeenth-century poets, for instance, he suggests that it was "just that fusion of the extremely elusive with a very definite, almost mathematical, basic scheme, which makes music the despair and envy of poets, gave it the prominent place it then enjoyed. It appealed to all that was ecstatic in the soul of the period, with the added stimulus of intellectual curiosity." This is clever criticism, giving an individual impetus to a whole train of speculations in the mind of the reader. *Aspects of Seventeenth Century Verse* is a captivating anthology, and owes much to an editor who is too quick even to labour a point and too enthusiastic to aim merely at exhibiting his own cleverness.

The Oxford Book of American Verse (10s. 6d.), is the latest addition to the notable anthologies of the Oxford University Press. Mr. Bliss Carmen is too sound and well-informed an editor for us to criticize his selections, which are specially representative of contemporary American poets in whom he happily finds an expression of a valiant and joyous spirit in place of the doleful or desperate resignation of the previous age, which confirm his as well as our belief in Matthew Arnold's declaration that the "future of poetry is immense" and the saying of the serene Emerson that "poetry has by no means all been written but rather is still only in its beginning." With such a compiler this collection of 454 examples of American verse cannot fail to be of permanent value and service.

We are not acquainted with Mr. John Murray Gibbon's *Melody and the Lyric* which has been highly praised, but we can guess that it is an attractive treatment of an interesting subject from its successor *Magic of Melody* (Dent 5s.), in which Mr. Gibbon shows the way to a new exercise of poetic activity. He has supplied the words to many famous melodies by Handel, Beethoven, Schubert, Chopin, and other eminent composers, suggesting in a fascinating introduction that other poets would do well to get back to music, to study it and singing as a preliminary to supplying words to many well-known compositions which lack them. Mozart and other composers tried to fit words to their compositions and found that they had not the necessary metrical skill, and could not, as Mozart himself confessed, " artfully arrange my phrases so as to give light and shade, for I am no poet." We may not be greatly impressed by Mr. Gibbon's examples but they certainly ought to be heard in conjunction with the music to which they are fitted and have been suggested by, and not judged apart, as they constitute really a translation of the tunes into verse, sometimes rhymed, sometimes unrhymed cadence. Very illuminating and appropriate introductions to each particular poet or composition are a feature of Mr. Gibbon's really charming book. His idea may be carried further and an attempt made to fit the supreme words of great poets to existing melodies as Burns did for himself. Tennyson in particular has been badly treated in modern settings, too much liberty being taken by the composers who, by the way, claim too much credit for themselves, not only in disguising the poems they select for treatment but in depriving the poet altogether of credit for inspiring the music.

To writers of verse there are some penetrating remarks made by the Poet Laureate in an address called " Shakespeare and Spiritual Life " which forms one of the chapters of his volume *Recent Prose* (Heinemann, 7s. 6d.) In it he says : " Many of you here are writers who know the excitement of creative writing, and the sense of power which comes with the clear sight and full possession of the truth groped for, arrived at, mastered, proven, and now to be set down. You will know that that achievement and attainment is a peak or summit in life, a triumph of body and mind working flawlessly together, a piece of rhythm such as can only come rarely, when the sea and the boat and the boat's crew are all in tune and time. Such achievement is a touching of the perfected self and an attainment of personal mastery ; it is rare in life, being the excellence of life ; but all who practise the arts have their good days, and many of you here have known it." The other chapters include illuminating discourses on Chaucer, Blake, Crabbe, Yeats and Synge.

Dorothy Margaret Stuart, well-known as D.M.S. of *Punch*, and a vice-president of The Poetry Society, has added a companion volume *The Girl through the Ages* to her successful *The Boy through the Ages*. (Harrap, 7s. 6d.) The authoress's aim is to " give a vivid and faithful picture of the typical child in each age," her task beginning with the bones of a girl of the Aurignacian era (25,000 B.C.) and ending with the " mid-Victorian little girl in whom all her contemporaries always seem to be incarnate "—Lewis Carroll's immortal Alice. Between these two extremes there is much close-packed information of historical and social interest, which yet miraculously escapes the slightest suggestion of a parade of learning. Miss Stuart writes in a conversational and yet graceful style, with a quick eye for the telling detail, as well as a thorough comprehension of her changing background. She knows that it is the odd touch, the pathetic evidence of human vanity, the necklace of cowrie-shells and fish-bones found with the bones of a prehistoric female skeleton, the phantom fragrance which clings still to the auburn hair of the Roman lady preserved in the museum at York, which makes the past alive for us, kindling a sudden comprehension between the living and the long dead. Throughout the course of the book Miss Stuart finds the girl of the age shadowed in the literature of the time, from Sophocles' heroines of Ancient Greece, through the Middle Ages, with such famous French romances as Aucassin and Nicolette, or Chaucer's gallery of vivid English portraits, down to Shakespeare's heroines, and Tennyson's *Princess*, and the later appearance of the girl in the novel. All this makes excellent reading, and Miss Stuart is to be congratulated on marshalling a mass of information from scattered sources into a whole at once consistent, instructive and highly entertaining.

The Poet in Childhood and Fiction

Modern poets have fallen into the habit of remembering their childhood and enquiring into their own beginnings. Three such volumes have reached us during the last month. Perhaps the most significant is Humbert Wolfe's *Now a Stranger* (Cassell, 6s.), in which very pleasantly and very properly in the aloof and detached manner of a spectator rather than an actor, Mr. Wolfe relates the disjointed recollections and indeterminate yearnings of a little Jew boy in Bradford forty years ago, an individual almost as strange to the present man as the surroundings in which the days before his teens were passed—a vivid picture and most interesting from many points of view and showing that the child is after all not entirely a stranger to the adult poet. Mr. Herbert Read is another Yorkshireman who has attempted to set down in *The Innocent Eye* (Faber, 6s.) his impressions of his early childhood on a remote farm far removed from the bustling life which surrounded Humbert Wolfe at a similar period. Mr. Read is very descriptive and factual, presenting an accurate picture of actual country life such as the present reviewer himself experienced in the same neighbourhood. To Mr. Read these early days are not strange and detached. He thinks that " if only I can recover the sense and certainty of those innocent years, years in which we seemed not so much to live as to be lived by forces outside us, by the wind and trees and moving clouds and all the mobile engines of our expanding world—then I am convinced I shall possess a key to much that has happened to me in this other world of conscious living." Hence the childhood recollections are important to him, especially if we agree to " the only real experiences in life being those lived with virgin sensibility—so that we only hear a tone once, only see a colour once, see, hear, touch, taste and smell everything but once, the first time. All life is an echo of our first sensations, and we build up our consciousness, our whole mental life, by variations and combinations of these elementary sensations."

Whether any of these poets can actually recall their emotional beginnings with real accuracy is questionable if we accept Mr. Read's own dictum that " memory is a flower which only opens fully in the kingdom of Heaven, where the eye is eternally innocent."

In *Shadow Show* (Partridge, 7s. 6d.), Richard Ince gives a full autobiography. His childhood and growth were less amiable than those of the other two poets. He had a more painful and less sympathetic time, a too common experience of young people with an intellectual and inward bent. Nevertheless he remains kindly and considerate himself, and after many wanderings and experiments and experiences, emotional and physical, he comes to the conclusion of the poet-mystic he has been all his life that " intellectual knowledge is but a flickering candle in the vast unknown. Not by study, not by lecturing or hearing lectures shall we learn to know ourselves or see God. Only experience, in the sense in which the mystics use the word, can bring comprehension of the fundamental truth. And to gain that experience we have, in a spirit of honesty and humility, to face ourselves and to change ourselves. God is within, imprisoned in the darkness of unconsciousness and continually betrayed. . . . Better to climb upward into the mountains than to wander aimlessly among the well-worn sheep-tracks of the plain. Better to scale the fence and enter the path where it ascends towards those heights that lie quiet and lonely under the stars."

Very much of the autobiography enters into a delightful gossip about *My Birds*, by W. H. Davies (Cape, 3s. 6d.) Charmingly written reminiscences centre round the bird friends of his garden by a very tender gentle poet who cannot bear to kill a beetle, and he is compelled occasionally to ornament his delightful prose with still more delightful simple verse.

The Poet as Novelist is at his best in Richard Aldington's new full-length novel, *All Men are Enemies* (Chatto & Windus, 8s. 6d.), in which the recollections and reminiscences of childhood are quite fully and pleasantly recorded, developing into a very beautiful and individualistic romance in which there is much tribulation but no bitterness, a really beautiful story of a type which we hope will become more common now, without the sense of uneasy frustration that has pervaded the modern intellectual novel. Mr. Aldington's romance would be still more satisfactory and still further removed from recent tendencies if he had omitted two non-essential incidents in the intimate relations of the two chief characters.

We have had within THE POETRY SOCIETY for many years a prolific novelist without being aware of it. " Catherine Dodd's " latest chronicle novel, *Eagle Feather* (Jarrolds, 7s. 6d.), is a very comprehensive account of the life of Shelley which apparently does not stray far from actual facts. It is more biography in the modern manner, and presents the great poet as a very ineffectual angel indeed. The pleasure of reading the book is considerably marred by bad punctuation.

THE POETS' FELLOWSHIP:

THE PREMIUM EDITOR'S REPORT

The following are the awards of the usual bi-monthly premium:

Katherine Parker (London, N.W.3) for four lyrics in varying styles, each showing admirable qualities;

"Cloudrider" (Budapest) for her sonnet "Dust," a poem of dignity and power;

Ken Ethridge (Cardiff) for his legendary poem, "In Search of Atlantis," which has a lovely conclusion as one of its chief merits, an uncommon one;

Elise Fellowes White (Brunswick, Maine) for her "Colour Poem," "Gray;"

Philip Bethell (West Kensington) for his exceedingly clever satirical poem, "Umbrella Men with Bowler Hats." This is very effective in versification, as well as in content.

Among the contributors in the list of authors "Highly Commended" must be particularly mentioned *T. E. Casson*, *Evelyn Couchman*, *Phyllis M. Lubbock*, *S. W. Powell* and *E. M. Sadler*.

Highly Commended

E. F. Alden, Haddenham, Bucks;
L. G. Barnett, Bishop's Stortford;
E. Broughton, Derby;
M. Carpenter, Caterham;
Evelyn Couchman, Menton;
A. E. Dewey, Wandsworth, S.W.;
G. W. Eustace, Arundel;
E. M. Fison, Felixstowe;
P. E. Goodman, Belvedore, Kent;
C. Desmond Greaves, Birkenhead;
I. Sutherland Groom, Clifton;
Josephine Hughes, Beckenham;
Irene Lewis, St. Leonard's;
P. M. Lubbock, Eastbourne;
L. Manning, Edmonton, N.;
E. O. Measor, London, S.W.;
I. M. Mills, Whetstone, N.;
Edith Mirick, Washington, D.C.;
S. W. Powell, Salisbury;
Beresford Richards, Alberta;
J. Ryn, Oxford;
E. M. Sadler, Beaconsfield;
D. H. Silver, Bedford;
M. Stewart, Bromley, Kent;
M. Tatum, Felixstowe;
J. Urquhart, London, S.W.;
Edith M. Walker, Bournemouth;
A. D. L. Wilson, Bedford.

Commended

I. B. Bell, Stockton-on-Tees;
A. T. Brown, London, S.W.;
K. C. Bruce, Liverpool;
M. Chamberlain, Leicester;
E. B. W. Chappelow, Blackheath;
Barnett D. Conlan, Lewes;
Graeme Hay, London, N.W.;
M. A. Holben, Edmonton, N.;
L. L. Kirby, London, S.W.;
R. McKie, Brighton;
K. Munro, Toronto;
M. Newton, Purley;
Iërne Ormsby, Yorkshire;
A. C. Percival, Bromley, Kent;
T. Pittaway, Frome;
Campbell Roper, Budleigh Salterton;
H. M. Slade, Ramsgate;
L. M. Taylor, Florence;
M. E. Milnes Walker, Madeira.
Phoebe Rayner, Bolton;
H. E. Trask, Dorchester.

The high standard of quality of the many MSS. submitted for the Norton Premium has made the awarding a somewhat difficult task. After much deliberation, the prize is divided between I. Sutherland Groom for her fine poem on Emily Brontë, and Doris Major, whose poem on Milton shows much distinction and thoughtful work. Much otherwise excellent verse has been marred by false rhythm, or triteness of expression, but with these few exceptions the contributions have been of good poetical value.

HIGHLY COMMENDED: M. W. Jones, Cardiff; Julia B. Green, Los Angeles; Irene B. Bell, Stockton-on-Tees; Reginald C. Eva, Sussex; Irene H. Lewis, Sussex; Mabel Posegate, Ohio; Graeme Hay, London, N.W.; Arthur Hood, London, W.; Jane P. Nott, Bristol; E. D. Bangay, Bucks.

COMMENDED: A. T. Alderson, Washington; Robin Lampson, California; K. V. Chevis, Herts; E. O. Measor, London, S.W.; G. Minshull, Croydon; K. O'Neill-Bailey, Glos.; T. Smith Robb, Webster Groves, Mo.; Nancy Pollok, Lanark; M. Stewart, Kent.

Many poets were touched on from Virgil to Noyes, each eulogy showing the admiration and affection the writer feels for his chosen " great one." Many of the writers had Shelley for their subject, Rupert Brooke being " second favourite." Altogether the competition was a most interesting one, and the competitors may be warmly congratulated on their entries.

Very much appreciated " Tea and Talk " meetings have been held in the Temple and at King Charles' Hunting Box. On the invitation of Mrs. Hugh Egerton, a special meeting for the reading of participants' own poems will be held at 9 Royal Avenue, Chelsea, S.W.3, on May 27th. As accommodation is limited attendance on this occasion must be restricted to members prepared to read, and no further intimation will be given. Tickets (1s. 6d. each) must be applied for by May 25th. Miss Norton again invites the Poet's Fellowship to meet at its original rendezvous on June 24th. Tickets must be obtained from THE POETRY REVIEW Office not later than June 22nd.

The usual premium of £2 for the best poem or poems submitted to the Premium Editor during the month (without limitation of subject) is continued. Not more than four lyrics or one long poem should be submitted. MSS. should be addressed to " The Premium Editor, THE POETRY REVIEW Office, 36 Russell Square, London, W.C.1," before June 1st, accompanied by stamped addressed envelope, and if criticism is desired, 2s. 6d. (For a more detailed postal criticism, 5s. should be sent.) Contributors must observe the elementary rule that name and address of writer must appear on each MS.

MR. ALFRED NOYES ON VERSE-SPEAKING

Mr. Alfred Noyes in awarding The Poetry Society's Gold Medal for Verse-Speaking at a poetry recital by holders of the adult silver medal on April 1st, said :—

" It is extremely difficult to estimate the comparative value of the different kinds of merit when hearing candidates speak entirely different kinds of poems, but the really outstanding results are fairly clear. Four Gold Medals have been awarded. The first goes to Rosemary Minnis who delivered her poems (particularly the Tennyson piece) with a great deal of feeling and as the poet himself would have wanted it delivered, with just this one small criticism, she was inclined to err on the right side. Hitherto, before The Poetry Society began its work—a very excellent work—the great fault in the delivery of poetry in public was the over-dramatization of lyrical poetry. People wanted to give a false interest to the lines by stressing words within the lines for dramatic purposes. We had one or two examples to-day but they were very slight. Lyrical poetry would become far too jumpy if every alteration in the poem were to be dramatized.

" You get your variety and you escape monotony by real sincerity and feeling : you put into the lines the sense of the music rather than gesture or what you might call ' vocal gesture.' It is the sincerity which gives the variety and the real sense of the meaning. In the case of Miss Minnis there was a slight tendency to err in the other direction. When one stresses a fault on one side the tendency begins to err on the other. You can have too great a monotony. It should not, of course, be monotony at all. That even flow that you get in the rendering of poetry by the poets themselves is never a monotony really, and yet there is no vocal gesture, no over-dramatization. The opening lines of ' Aenone ' are a very good example of what all poets feel should be meant by the music of poetry. There is something in the sound and tone of the music being properly delivered with sincere feeling, and the reciter gets inside the skin of the poem, or rather lets the poem get inside his or her skin, speaking it as though it is their own poem or their own innermost thoughts put into perfect expression for them. The poem should be delivered almost as though you were thinking aloud. Then you would find no need for monotony on the one hand or dramatization or vocal gesture on the other, and you would escape from the rise and fall of voice so noticeable in the ' elocutionist.' There is a naturalness of delivery by which you can escape both extremes, and this afternoon we have been shown the natural music of poetry without attempts to be dramatic.

" The second medal goes to Anne Lipman whose rendering of both poems was extremely good. Two others go to Esther Samms and Caron Rock, respectively. Both have a great feeling for poetry. Miss Samms in her rendering of ' I Stood Tiptoe ' gave it with great feeling and it is a very difficult poem to render, there are a great many lines in it and they deal with a great many different subjects which call for a great deal of expression and delicate feeling, and it seemed to me that she rendered it in a remarkable way. She gave the varieties of expression most skilfully and beautifully, and in a small room among true lovers of poetry both Miss Samms and Miss Rock would impart that love of poetry which it is the aim of this Society to instil. Miss Rock's delivery of ' Choosing a Mast ' was beautiful, and that invocation in ' The Ring and The Book '—one of the supreme pieces of English poetry which the slightest over-dramatization would have ruined—she gave with such beautiful feeling that one really felt that one was hearing the poet's invocation.

" There is another fault in the reading of poetry that has gradually been overcome largely through the work of this Society—that is the idea that in order to give the full beauty of a poem or the full effect you have to take it out, carefully extract it from the metre which the poet has spent so much time in composing, and deliver it in what school-teachers call ' common sense.' You break up the poet's effects in order to get a false syntax of your own. In any real poem the music of the poem, the cadences of the lines do express the sense, therefore when one hears children being taught not to be singsong you are probably hearing them being taught to render poetry in the entirely wrong way. The child who is taught carefully that there are metrical values in the lines is on the right road to the appreciation of poetry. You must realize that if you want the real meaning of the poem you had better trust the poet. His cadences and his rhymes and the way he varies his own metrical basis should give you the true meaning of the poem if he is a true poet and it is a true poem. Unfortunately this is another fault which can be turned round the other way. It does not mean that one should chop one's lines at the end or that each line must be delivered in itself. There should be just the slightest stress which indicates where the rhyme or the end of the line comes. It is possible to run on your lines and yet get the beat and indicate where the rhymes come, because if it is a true poem the rhyme is part of the meaning and it does indicate a real stress in the meaning of the poem. A poem should be delivered as a poem and not as bad prose. The whole effect is spoilt if you have not got the poem inside you and say it in such a way that the hearer thinks you are stating your own best and sincerest thoughts.

" I want to conclude by saying that I think once more we all owe a really very great debt to The Poetry Society for spreading this interest in poetry because the English poetry, which we have on our book-shelves too often instead of in our hands and in our hearts, is one of the greatest assets of this country. It is a much greater asset than people realize.

" I do feel that The Poetry Society which has stuck to its guns through a very difficult time and a great deal of criticism and has really stood by the great poets of the past and particularly that great artist of the nineteenth century, Tennyson, has really brought about a change in things. It is obvious that the Society has still a great work to do. It is time we pulled ourselves together and realized we have got a very great deal in our literature and our poetry, and what very great treasures of music and meaning and spiritual value there are in our English poetry."

The Essex Weekly News (Chelmsford) in a note on the success of Miss Rock, who, by the way, is the author of a poem, " He is The Lonely Greatness of the World," found in *Lyra Mystica* (Macmillan) and other anthologies, stated :

" A distinction which lovers of literature prize above rubies has been conferred upon MISS CARON ROCK, of Ingatestone. The Poetry Society has given her one of its four gold medals awarded for verse-speaking. Mr. Alfred Noyes paid Miss Rock a tribute which must be very gratifying to her." After quoting the remarks of Mr. Noyes, " The Deemster " adds : " This is praise indeed, coming as it did from one of the foremost contemporary writers of English verse. The Poetry Society is doing a great and valuable work in spreading an interest in poetry, including the reading of verse aloud, or verse-speaking, as it is more properly called."

LITERAL OR LYRICAL VERSE-SPEAKING

(*To the Editor* THE POETRY REVIEW.)

SIR, It was rather a surprise to me to read, in Mr. Ernest Milton's speech when awarding the Gold Medal for Verse Speaking that he regarded the carrying over of a word into the next line, to make sense, as a grave mistake. He evidently regards rhythm, and as it were, the sheer music of poetry, as of more importance than the sense, and holds that rhythm should never be sacrificed.

This raises a very important point, which should be a matter of great interest to all readers and speakers of verse. In my own opinion, one of the great beauties of poetry is its elasticity ; and rhythm still exists, even in free verse, and in fine prose, like the eternal rhythm of the sea.

In music, the subject of a fugue, at its different entries, is not necessarily emphasized, but it becomes a part of the web of counterpoint ; and in like manner, in rhyming, metrical verse, the rhythm still exists—however many words may be carried over to the next lines—as a part of the essential pattern of the poem.

I defer to Mr. Ernest Milton as an incomparable actor and master of English verse-speaking, but venture to submit this as my humble opinion.

Harrow, March 30, 1933. Yours faithfully, F. E. SLADE.

[This is rank heresy. When a line consists of a definite number of feet is it proper to rush on and make it appear to contain half as many more followed by an irregular short line ? Try reading Browning's " Guardian Angel " with attention to punctuation only and not to the metrical setting. Surely the sheer music of poetry is of infinitely more importance than the sense.—EDITOR.]

THE DEATH OF SARA TEASDALE

Our American Editor, Mrs. Alice Hunt Bartlett, has suffered a severe bereavement by the sudden death at Nassau, in the Bahamas, of her sister Mrs. Ethel Hunt Tyng, wife of Mr. Lucien Tyng, of the investment firm of Barstow, Tyng & Co. of New York, a Life Member and Vice-President of The Poetry Society. Mrs. Tyng, who was a painter of ability, obtained social recognition by her practical efforts to help needy artists.

We also regret to hear of the sudden death of Mrs. Percy Hamilton Stewart, a Life Member and Vice-President of The Poetry Society and the donor of the " Cathedral " Premium. Mrs. Stewart, who was one of the wealthiest women in the United States, having inherited from her father thirty-five million dollars, and a further million dollars from an uncle and a large sum from her brother, was a generous supporter of the missionary medical work of Sir Wilfred Grenfell in Labrador. Mrs. Stewart was also particularly interested in serious artistic expression, and compiled, amongst other works, a small volume of Prayers published by Edwin S. Gorham of New York, from which we quote " Adoration " :

> " Oh, Father, all merciful, all powerful, guide our paths into quiet places where the noise and the hurry of the world are hushed and where our souls may be given up to adoration and contemplation of Thy wonderful deeds and undying love.
>
> " Make our ears quick to hear Thy call, our feet strong to climb the dazzling heights where Thy Presence dwells.
>
> " Bless those who through care and tribulation are weary in Life's journey and lead their steps toward help and safety."

Mrs. Bartlett reminds us we must make note also of the death of Sara Teasdale, " our leading lyric poet. No stranger to these pages, we have followed her beautiful song through her many books. Sara Teasdale had recently returned from London, suffering from the effects of pneumonia. Her condition was complicated by a nervous breakdown from which she had not recovered. She was forty-eight years old. Miss Teasdale was born at St. Louis on August 8th, 1884. She first attracted attention in 1907 by a volume entitled *Sonnets to Duse and other poems* ; this was followed in 1911 with another collection called *Helen of Troy and other Poems*, and in 1915 with *Rivers to the Sea*, which won more favourable comment than any of her later works, with the possible exception of her volume of love songs. Miss Teasdale received two awards for the last mentioned work, which was published in 1917, one was the $500 prize of The Poetry Society for the best book of poetry, the work of a citizen of the U.S., to be published that year, and the other the Pulitzer prize of $500 for the book of poems being the best of the year. This work contains a poem that may be regarded as foreshadowing the trend of her thoughts in later years."

We give the poem " I Shall not Care " :

When I am dead and over me bright April
  Shakes out her rain-drenched hair,
Though you should lean above me broken hearted.
  I shall not care.

I shall have peace, as leafy trees are peaceful
  When rain bends down the bough,
And I shall be more silent and cold-hearted,
  Than you are now.

Unforgettable is her short poem entitled " Let it be Forgotten " :

Let it be forgotten as a flower is forgotten,
  Forgotten as a fire that once was singing gold.
Let it be forgotten forever and ever.
  Time is a kind friend, he will make us old.

If any one asks, say it was forgotten
  Long and long ago,
As a flower, as a fire, as a hushed footfall
  In a long forgotten snow.

Sara Teasdale's poem, " Serene Descent," is significant of her valiant philosophy :

Serene descent like a red leaf descending
Where there is neither wind nor sound of rain
Only the autumn air and the unending
Calling of all things to the earth again.

So be it, let the snow sift and cover
All that was drunken once with light and air
The earth will not regret her tireless lover
Nor he awake to know she does not care.

Turning to Mr. Markham's valuable anthology, wherein he prefaces his selection with striking comment, we find the following :

> " In the purity of her song, Sara Teasdale is placed first as the American poet of lyric love. Rarely, if ever, does she betray any striving after effects, but achieves her end with the utmost simplicity of method. As she herself says, ' I feel that the best of my work is done in brief, exceedingly simple poems. I try to say what moves me. I never care to surprise my reader ; and I avoid all words that are not met with in common speech, and avoid all inversions of word or phrase.' "

SARA TEASDALE
JANUARY 29TH, 1933.

As bright hours vanish westward
  Leaving—a song behind

We of the earth are hearing
  Your voice on the evening wind
Your lovely voice of longing
  An echo—unconfined,

. . . Startled and sad we gather
  To honour you whose days
Have lost the load of living
  And stepped beyond life's ways
And hear you—singing, singing—
  Your faultless, fearless lays.

* * *

England Their England by A. G. Macdonell (Macmillan 7s. 6d.), has many attractions for us, being a very lively study of English character and characteristics, subtly satirical and occasionally hilariously extravagant, especially in the treatment of an assumedly brilliant group of poets and essayists and their editors and associates in London, unexpectedly ending on a fine note of high seriousness with a vision of the poets and poetry that have created an England that is not an illusion, evoked under the mediaeval spell of Winchester.

One Fine Day I was Walking Along (Dent 6s.), is another unusual book. The author, Margot Robert Adamson, whom we remember for her remarkable narrative poem, *The Forester's Wife*, is a traveller who in walking along sees Mount Sion and the poetry of art that appertains thereto, revealing in picturesque prose, supplemented by occasional descriptive chapters in verse, the rich historic life and significance of mediaeval Germany through which she has wandered and of the ancient kingdoms of Scotland in which she has lived, showing us that the world need not be a difficult place to live in for those to whom " walking along " is to " Walk in Jerusalem, Just like John." For those also to whom the swiftness and continuity of ,the great green engines of the east-coast route and the rapid alexandrines of the Calais-Balse express are the essence of the poetry of motion this exceptional travel book in prose and verse, but poetical throughout, will be a great delight.

The Voice, the appropriately-named verse play at the Kingsway Theatre, missed doing a great service to the poetic drama so much in need of revival. Handsomely produced, with actors who could speak their lines clearly, effectively and with cadence, and with some excellent speaking in unison, a great opportunity was lost by the unnecessary windy verbosity of the play, the absence of lucidity and the too evident belief that versification consists chiefly in indulgence in inversions.

AN ODE IN HONOUR OF EROS AND OF PSYCHÉ

NOT for the wreathèd tomb, the consecrated grove,
not even for the Temple of our Love
this coronal I bring
of love in flower—as though it were the Spring
and the month May fragrant with lilacs pressed
and lilies, and still more lilies of the Vale
and hawthorn boughs, all amorously pale
and candid flowers, in clusters and in sprays ;
not there I'd strew them 'mid the piled-up Bays,
but shyly where the lover's heart is laid
—the lover's heart of Gallant or of Maid—
that Unknown Hero buried in each breast
who battles still and cannot find his rest

For though no tuckets echo and none shall raise the shout,
the heart's an Alexander who rides out
to conquer a whole world
when first it loves, with all its hopes unfurled.
—Ah ! fairer than the fabled Continent
miraged at sea seems the Beloved One's soul
rising through mists spectrally radiant
promising Plenty and the deep-veined ore
—a new Peru for Love's Conquistador !
It lures as ineluctably as the Pole,
as the ascension of an unscaled range,
the charmed disembarkation for a shore
untenanted and tropically strange.

What heart can help its love ? What life elude the day
the one day, oft survived of all the year,
that it must die ?
Mysterious as our mortality
the face beloved will uninvoked appear
amidst the throng to ravish us away.
Our love must out ! as easy as a sleep
comes o'er the heart its metamorphosis
—May's butterfly on dazzled wings to sweep
straight to its sun !—so natural is bliss
none knows for ever whence it springs, nor why
with immemorial craving should the kiss
be inexplicable as Poetry.

We go into love like schoolboys into battle
most happy to be killed ;
the thunder breaks and we prefer its rattle

to that auspicious calm with which our days were filled
in pause before the storm. The heart no craven is
although the body cringe, for it will bear
partings, opprobrium, angers and despair,
the loneliness of the Lighthouseman in his tower
his comrade drowsed and not a ship ahoy ;
Love smiles and will deny its injuries
—another Galileo in its hour—
and keep the faith the months cannot destroy
through the long torment of deferrèd joy.

We who were born long ere our Soul was fired
by some enkindling spark from Beauty's fane,
have not desired
the Helen conjured by magic all in vain ;
our Soul has been led on at Ariel's call
from Earth to Love, through ecstasies unnamed,
—anguish and ache of starlight and the thrall
of sunrise and of sunsets that have flamed,
to clasp the ultimate loveliness of all !
For when is stooped down the belovèd face
we strain indeed all heaven in our embrace,
and when our lips close the belovèd eyes
we kiss at last the azure of the skies.

We may decline, our Soul from its meridian brought low,
which is at best
a Winter's sun expiring t'wards the West ;
as late it came so early it may go ;
we who are not immortal only know
this is the Apotheosis of the Soul
—Psyché ascended to the courts above—
her wanderings ended and her earthly dole ;
who greatly loves is God, Whose gesture says :
" No lesser dedication will suffice
—lips, hands, nor pledgings—than the sacrifice
not of dying, but of living all our days
with arms held open still for whom we love."

WINIFRED E. GÉRIN.

TO-NIGHT, AGAIN THE MOON

I LEANED out of the window,
The moon was bold
Over the slim loveliness
Of night,
I saw the stiff white grass,
The silent stars,
My heart
Sprang cold.

Not so young—not old!
What do "they" say—
Forget?
I cannot, as I live
When the moon is cold,
The War is old,
I am not old,
As yet.

I lean far out,
No grass,
But smooth grey roofs
Are here, and slanting
Shadows
From the chimneys,
Peer,
Every brick stands
Clear.

Our neighbour's—their neighbour's
House, shines
Stark and trim,
On ours—the highest roof,
Moonbeams swim.

. . . Eyes, that do not dare again
Look out,
Ears shattered, every
Shuddering limb
Sick,

Sick, with fright,
No God, without,
Within,
My body, useless,
Spineless . . . cold . . .

To-night again the moon
So bold,
And fear worms threadlike in——

PHYLLIS M. LUBBOCK.

THE DREAMERS

I CANNOT tell you by what way we come,
Nor at what sacrifice, nor to what end.
No words would tell you. We are blind and dumb.
We walk the world unwanted, without friend.
You can but see the sweetness that we miss,
The drowsy warmth, the breath on trembling breath,
The heady drought of passion, the drained kiss.
We guard a lonely passional for death.

We keep some fatal trysting. We shall fear
Neither the storm, nor the bewildering pain
Of man's misunderstanding. We are near
The beauty of creation, and attain
To hope of life eternal, the quiet urge
Of immortality, the soul that stirs
The outward flame of beauty. We shall merge
Into the grief of all earth's voyagers.

I cannot say what madness keeps us thrall
To such far vision. We receive no peace,
No certainty of finding. We are all
Dreamers and fools. The dream will never cease.
It will go on for ever, though we die
As cattle die in agony, and rot.
And if old death turn traitor, we shall lie
Beyond compassion, and remember not.

K. V. CHEVIS.

IN SEARCH OF ATLANTIS

(Based on a Welsh Legend)

SEVEN wizards set out in a ship of glass
To look for Atlantis,
The lost land.
For there they said Gwyn, son of the Mists, dwelt,
Whom others call the dawn-god,
And ruler of the green mounds
And the green rings,
He dwelt in the summer-land.

The men there are of immense size,
Not puny and weak,
And dying at a sword-prick
Like the men of their own land.
The princes there are at peace,
Not warring and making strife,
And reducing the happiness they seek
Like the princes of their own land.
The people there are strong and gladsome,
Not like the people of Cymru
Strong-spirited and uneasy,
Restless and wrathful the people of their own land.
There are orchards too and vineyards,
And garden terraces
Row upon row
Of hanging branches
And flowers beneath the branches on the sward,
Pale jets of fire with hearts carven like a jewel.
And there are palaces amid the orchards,
White and wonderfully calm,
Shining with their gold-roofed turrets.
Like candles round the altar of a church.
There are maidens at the windows of the palaces,
Who look forth continuously,
Watching the peaceful paths in the smooth meadows,
And the riderless highways,
And the deserted shore
And the changeless sea.

Once a tawny bear came
Bristling through the crashing brine
That spread icily over his brown ears,
And washed a gold comb and a gold scissors,
Plaited in his hair, free of blood
That hung on them in deep red drops.
And when he came ashore he shook himself,
And changed into a young man
Gleaming from the foam-bath
Like ivory his skin, and very black his hair.

Once a sombre barge came
Sunk like a grieving swan into the billow
And three queens rowed ashore,
And brought a wounded king,
One Arthur
To his dwelling there.

Nothing has come since,
Save that Isolde, in her winged disguise
A brilliant moth, passed near,
On her way to the tent of roses built for her
By the secret Kinsfolk of loveliness
On the eastern shore.

Nothing has passed since ;
Not a cloud that might be a bird ;
Not a breeze that might be a voice ;
Not a flake that might be a ghost ;
Not a butterfly, not a beast,
Nor any wave-creature,
Nor boat of wood,
Nor ship of glass.

And the seven wizards who set out
Have not come to Atlantis,
The lost land.

KEN ETHERIDGE.

PERÉDUR'S TREE

SOME say that man is like Perédur's tree,
One half in flames, the other in full leaf;
But none can say if man's best form would be
Most fire or flower, or if his fret and grief
Are flames that gnaw the border of the green,
Or blossoms glowing where the fire has been.

Some say that flower and flame were one time wed,
Not incompletely, each on half a stem,
But in a plant whose every blossom bled
A dew of fire, and vapoured mystic red
Aerial blooms with insects lost in them.

But it must ever be so, that the flame
Spreads on a severed trunk its magic blaze;
And no man knows what is the proper name
To give to grief; or if fire is the same
As life itself. When man has solved the maze
In which he wanders, he may find a way
To flames like roses, and to flowers like day.

C. DESMOND GREAVES.

TOO LATE

TOO late we see that fear has ruled our days,
The futile, formless fear of the unknown,
And we have trodden dull, familiar ways,
Adventuring nothing while our lives have flown.
We should have scaled dread heights, and sailed dark seas,
Outfacing danger, daring fortune rude,
Then had we not so lacking been in these,
Wisdom, and strength, and quiet fortitude.

But, though too late these wishes to attain,
Too late to lay the haunting spectre, fear,
We yet the dignity of age may gain
That gives men grace their last sad ills to bear,
And, when fear takes its last strange, awful shape,
Sustains the spirit till it can escape.

M. STEWART.

SONGS

I

ONCE, hand in hand with young Unhappiness
I walked, and when her soft touch brought distress
I could break forth in song my heart to heal :
But now has sorrow come—
Pain that I never thought to feel,
And the babe Song within me stirreth not
Or stirring dies unborn, and sense is numb.

When Fancy touched me, lightly tripping by
And her warm colours glowed before my eyes,
Then could I handle words for pleasing show :
But now has passion come—
Love that I never thought to know,
And the word dies unspoken on the lips
My heart is struggling—full, but I am dumb.

II

Seal up the fire
And let no spark remain,
Lest a stray gust of wind should blow this way,
Kindle the ash again—
And make our labour vain.

Seal up the spring
Nor heed th' insistent splash
For should you move the heavy stone away
Out will the water rush
And all begin afresh.

A. C. PERCIVAL.

A STAR

ACROSS my darkness you shot like a star.
Cleaving the deep blue gloom ;
Annihilating all its velvety spaces ;
Spangling the vast with drops of brightness
Changing its depths to a silken surface ;
Across my darkness you sped, a thing of beauty.
Shattering the deep blue gloom
A swift, flashing dart of silver.

E. S. BROUGHTON.

ON THREE MORE MODERN POETS

Alan Porter, Roy Campbell, Wallace B. Nichols.

THE reader has now followed me—patiently and indulgently, I hope—through a survey of the work of six of our outstanding contemporary poets. He may not always have concurred with my judgments or opinions, and perhaps the authors whom I have selected to write upon are not the ones he would have chosen himself, but literary criticism, with its likes and its dislikes, is, and always must be, largely subjective in character, and the critic must claim independence as his most sacred prerogative. Of course, in the case of modern literature there is less likelihood of one falling into the expression of trite opinions than there is with the literature of a past age, for traditional judgments are as yet non-existent, and so-called " authorities " on this or that poet have not yet arisen. But the danger of conventional treatment still remains. I have tried to steer clear of it as far as possible, save where it seemed to have any specific value.

By all the canons of modern practice, a survey of present-day literature should conclude with a note on the present position and an indication of the outlook for the future; but I intend to give neither. That there is a future for English poetry is beyond doubt, and for me that is sufficient; I am content to leave it to look after itself, quite conscious that whatever development I may decree for it will affect it no whit, either for good or for bad. In the case of each of the writers we have considered, I have attempted to be as concise and as lucid as possible, so that any kind of retrospect or summary seems uncalled for, and as for the present position, we have all probably made up our minds about it by this time. Yet one does feel that the subject of modern poetry cannot be left without some reference to one or two living writers whose work seems to merit a little more attention than it has yet received. To three of these, therefore, I now turn.

It was a signal honour that was accorded Alan Porter when in 1930 some five modern poets, amongst them Edmund Blunden and Richard Church, prefaced his first volume, *The Signature of Pain*, with commendatory verses of their own. Dead poets have sometimes received this distinction in the past, living poets rarely ever, much less a young author whose reading public has hitherto been confined to a small circle of friends. Yet it was under such auspicious circumstances that Alan Porter made his *début* in the world of poetry. Nor were his five fellow-writers the only ones to recognize the unusual and distinctive quality of his work. The collection was well received by the majority of critics, while *The Times Literary Supplement*, not usually extravagant in its distribution of praise, indulged in an unusual display of superlatives. "We doubt," wrote that journal, " whether any more notable volume of poetry has been published since the war." Well, one need hardly utter the warning against these sweeping statements which reviewers are over-fond of making. Usually they are intended to be taken *cum grano salis* ; yet there is no doubt that *The Signature of Pain* is a significant work, and one does not feel any great hesitation in prophesying that by future ages it will be recognized as an important document in the literary history of our early twentieth century.

In one of the prefatory poems referred to above, Mr. W. Force-Stead saluted Alan Porter with the words,

> your gifts are three,
> Wit, music, and philosophy,

and this tribute is perhaps the best introduction to an appreciation of the poet, for it sums up, as succinctly as any critic could, the outstanding qualities of his work. A first reading leaves an impression of scholarship allied to a wide experience of life; a more detailed study only serves to deepen that impression. One feels that every sentence Mr. Porter writes has been thought out with care and precision, that nothing has been committed to paper until it has stood the twin tests of reason and experience. For to Mr. Porter the whole of existence is intensely meaningful. There may be comedy in it, there may be a lighter side, and beyond doubt there is love ; but at bottom life is a duel with pain, and pain is the inevitable lot of mortality. That is the meaning of that curious piece, *Woman's Tears*, written, so the author himself avers, in May 1920,—

Your sorrow may be truth or art :
Hold, woman, or you break my heart.
  I fear
 At one more tear
All's over—I run raving down
The public highway of the town.

How can I fetch you out relief,
As daft as you with this dumb grief ?
  I know
 My wits will go ;
I'll roar for rage, as children do.
Or weep and be a woman, too.

It needs no second reading of lines such as these to convince us that they come from the pen of no ordinary versifier. There is an individuality of tone about them, the impress of an individual mind. The burning intensity of feeling, the rigid economy of language, the whimsical figures of speech—one feels tempted to call them conceits—are something new for modern poetry. There is nothing of the novice about them, either ; they are the creation of a mature genius, for Mr. Porter's muse seems to have been born full-grown. He is a poet of acute observation, of analytical mind, of deep insight. But if he is aware, and painfully so, of the suffering of life, he is no misanthrope or pessimist ; he believes with equal conviction in the healing power of love:

Heart, that the fine and crystal splinter
Pierced with the flush and throb of cold
Till the whole brilliant world was winter,
And shrank, and darkened, and was old.

Shine with new warmth ! and like the sun.
Who blesses the black, twisted trees,
Who comforts all he looks upon,
And gives the barren soil increase,

Remember not the more and less,
Better and worse, the yours and mine ;
Shine out with such unthriftiness
That all things by reflection shine.

These are the concluding stanzas of the poem *Valediction*, and they contain the gist of the writer's philosophy, a philosophy which is reinforced in *Love's Fragility*, where he declares,

> I well believe that love is strong
> To bear the heaviest dints of doom;
> Confronts the tempest with a song;
> Conquers the tomb.
>
> I well believe that love is firm
> When love is fostered between two:
> Mortality can set no term
> If both be true.

Mr. Porter's style, I have said, is essentially individual. His mode of writing, with its keen wit, its brilliant phraseology and its tightly knit, philosophic thinking, is reminiscent of the poets of the late seventeenth century: indeed, it would be no great exaggeration to describe him as a modern metaphysical writer, for in spite of the lapse of some two and a half centuries since the passing of the school to which Dr. Johnson applied that epithet, there is much in his work recalling Cowley and Donne.[1] He has a profound knowledge of psychology, especially the psychology of the abnormal mind; he can pierce to the bottom of human character and emotion, and express their essentials in a few telling words; yet there is nothing of monotony in his verses. Every poem stands secure in its own strength. Each is a neat, closely woven entity. The piece from which the volume takes its title, for instance, packed as it is with earnest thought, is written in finely chiselled phraseology, which bespeaks a poet with a marvellous command of language and a discriminating ear for music. About some of his lines, condensed, one would think, to the utmost possible limits, there is an almost epigrammatic force, while here and there a touch of trenchant irony lends a note of burning conviction to a passage of high æsthetic quality. Based upon the assumption that pain and suffering produce the noblest characters, the poem is actually a spiritual challenge to narrow materialism. For pain, the writer tells us, is an anguish of the soul, not an affliction of the flesh, and all must experience it before they can attain to spiritual calm and peace :

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[1] This was written before the appearance of Mr R. L. Mégroz's *Modern English Poetry*, 1882—1932. I find, however, that Mr. Mégroz is in entire agreement with me upon this point, and draws the same comparison. The "egocentric" note which Mr. Mégroz notices in the work of Alan Porter is, presumably, the same characteristic that I have styled individualism.

Perhaps your splinters have a power to prickle ;
To rend the heart ; to open out abysses ;
To conjure demons—I believe it true.
They are not pain, for pain is spiritual,
Disarmed by spirit and her signature
Known by the eyes of flesh when spirit has known her.
The inoffensive shining of the sun
Bears witness that he gave her habitation ;
For not alone in strength he goes, but peace
Follows his footsteps, and a fostering care.
Even in the shell he comforts the small bird ;
Who speaks up manfully and issues forth
To a new world, rejoicing in the sun,
Standing and straddling over the green turf.

If there is understanding, there she walked,
A holy guest. Of gentleness and truth,
She gave her blessing. Every countenance
That warms and lights the heart of the beholder
Shews, clear and true, the signature of pain.

This economy of language, allied to clear thinking and profundity of feeling is particularly apparent in the love-verses. Now erotic poetry, more easily than any other, can become mawkish and undignified ; but Alan Porter's never does, and this for a very good reason. His technique demands restraint, sincerity, crystal-clear imagery ; there is no room for gush or sentimentality. Every line, yes, almost every word, must express vital feeling. Thus *A Plea that Shame be Forgotten* is one of the shortest poems in the entire volume ; yet by a terse, happily chosen diction the author has put into the brief compass of five lines a whole wealth of suggestion.

There should between true lovers be
An excellent immodesty.

Only a real poet could have written a couplet like that. It seems so simple, so direct, so spontaneous; yet how meaningful it is.

But if our poet has something of the metaphysical strain about him, he is no less a transcendentalist. It was his friend J. Isaacs, in his poem *To Alan Porter on His Departure for America* that greeted him as, "Alan in mood and music Coleridge's peer," and the description was no mere empty compliment. In his sense of the indefinable depth behind the material things of the world, in his skilful fusion of form with content, but most of all in his keen appreciation of natural beauty, Alan Porter is akin to the author of *Kubla Khan* and *Christabel*. We turn over the pages of his volume until we come to a sonnet composed in November, 1917, when the guns on the Western Front were busy, "drowning nature's sweet and kindly voices," as Longfellow would have put it, and there, in the opening stanza, we read,

> I know that every simple flower I see
> Sets in my heart her seed, and every tree
> That lifts her many leaves in moving grace
> Pours through my being her own harmony;

and we are reminded of Coleridge's assertion that "in our life alone does nature live." But though he may be Coleridge's peer, he is no mere slavish copyist of that poet. Even his nature poetry strikes an individual note. *The Cosmopolitan*, a set of stanzas addressed to Edith Sitwell, voices admiration for John Clare, who:

> uncovered infinite worth
> In a cold worm, a common weed;

yet only in one piece, *Summer Bathing*, is there any real resemblance to the work of Clare. More often Mr. Porter prefers to depict a scene over which there broods a bleak, stark atmosphere. Winter is his favourite season; but whether he writes of winter or summer, day or night, whether the scene is bright or sombre, he always manages to infuse into it a suggestion of depth and immensity, and a consciousness of something beyond what is immediately apparent to the perception.

> The grey grass in the early winter
> Stiffens and crinkles up for cold;

The air withers to big hemlocks
And bracken fronds are brown and old

That is his picture of a December morning. True, it is brief, but it really " gets there." The poet knows just the details to select, just the words to employ. So cleverly is it done that a reader can almost feel the frigidity of the scene. Then there is another picture, equally meritorious, of that hour of evening when twilight is passing into dark. It is called *Preparation for Night*, and reads :

The moon swam out for higher stars,
And frosted all the fields below
With curious bars and scars,
Pools and pools of light,
The river chitter-chattered under the barges.

These few lines constitute the entire poem, but about them there is evidence of a wonderful accuracy of observation and precision of diction. Nor is our author ignorant of the value of sound-sequences and metrical effects. The first four lines, with their smooth cadence and their preponderance of soft consonants, breathe the calmness and serenity of the evening air ; and then we come to the last, where a combination of short vowels and onomatopœic devices suggest the ripple of the water around the sombre-looking barges. Of course, a poet may employ these devices too frequently, so that they become mere verbal jugglery, without any real artistic value ; but Mr. Porter never transgresses the limits of good taste. Pre-eminently a disciplined artist, he is a master of the subtlest of his stylistic qualities.

I have referred already to Alan Porter's gift of keen and penetrating insight and his profound knowledge of psychology. Perhaps it is these gifts that enable him to write such subtle character studies as those in *Bedlam Bill*, who stands all day " throwing pennies in a pond," and *The Dean*, whose mission is

to cure the soul,
With the neat practices of birth control.

This last piece, aimed at an actual, living Dean, whose name we discover from one of the couplets, rhymes with " sing," shows incidentally the poet's power of irony and stinging satire. What could be more forceful, what more clever and pointed than the following sermon which this ecclesiastical dignitary is supposed to preach from the pulpit of St. Paul's?

> " All men my equals? Why, there may be some;
> But only friends; not persons from a slum.
> Those men are ugly, ignorant of Greek;
> Their minds are dull, their manners far to seek;
> They work, they get their wages by the week.
> The Empire totters, and I feel distressed
> When men are seen inelegantly dressed;
> We Christians-within-reason may think meet
> To wash a few, but not such dirty feet.
> The warmth of God descends upon them. Hi!
> Don't touch them! They're contagious! Let them die!
> God has decreed, for all whom he holds dear,
> A pulpit and three thousand pounds a year."

Many readers, no doubt, will find themselves carried back to Byron; and indeed there is something very Byronic about it; but still more it is reminiscent of Dryden. The balanced line, the regular caesura, the crisp, pointed phraseology, all can trace their descent ultimately to *Absalom and Achitophel* and *MacFlecknoe*; and in point of ingenuity none of them fall far below their predecessors.

Mr. Porter's poetry is the fruit of what a recent critic has styled " the simple vision "; that is to say, a steady, fearless, unimpassioned contemplation of life from all its angles. Like Matthew Arnold, he " sees life steadily and sees it whole," and as a result he can not only give us the wide and comprehensive view of humanity that he does in *The Museum*, but he has a very definite philosophy, carefully thought out and well-considered, the outcome of his full experience of the world, the grotesque as well as the beautiful, the rough as well as the smooth, the bitter as well as the sweet. All that he has written is characterized by an inward poise and an adjustment of the imagination to fit the facts of life. Though each poem is a separate entity, with an individuality of its own, standing or falling by its own worth, the book taken as a whole is also an entity, from which there emerges a very positive personality. And what is the key to it? It can, I think, be summed up in a single word—balance. Feeling tempered with intellect, sorrow blended with joy, a power of intense indignation allied to a true sense of humour, tenderness mingled with stoical austerity, and withal a deep sense of the beauty in all things; that is Alan Porter.

If Mr. Porter is a modern disciple of the metaphysical school of poets, Roy Campbell marks a return to the neo-classic strain of the Restoration and Augustan ages of English Literature. As yet he is but at the beginning of his career as a writer; a long future lies before him, and no one can say in exactly what direction his genius will develop, but the work that he has produced so far has shown a predilection for that particularly pungent type of satire which one usually associates with the name of Pope. Now, of the whole literary armoury, satire is the most dangerous weapon to use, for only too often it is apt to recoil, boomerang fashion, upon the satirist himself, and to reveal his weakness as well as his strength. Pope found that out to his cost; so did Byron; and Roy Campbell has been unable to escape from it altogether. But if there are crudities in his work which one would wish away, there is also an unmistakable strength and forcefulness.

We can, I think, trace two distinct influences upon Mr. Campbell's poetry. The first is that of the struggles and the hardships which have been the lot of so many of our younger poets who have written for the post-war generation; and the other is that of his environment. For actually Mr. Campbell is only an English poet in so far as he writes in the English language. By nationality he is Scotch, though he has spent the greater part of his life in South Africa, and thus conflict has been part of his inheritance. It is imprinted upon most of his literary work. One of the best volumes of verse that he has ever published is that entitled *Adamastor* (1930) and Adamastor, he tells us in a note to that collection, is the name given to the Spirit of the Cape, whose apparition and prophecy form one of the finest passages in *The Lusiad* of Camoens. Not until we have read the whole *corpus* of his writings, perhaps, do we realize how particularly appropriate this title is ; and not only appropriate, but symbolic, for all of Mr. Campbell's poetry is suffused by the Spirit of the Cape. The conflict between Dutch and British is there, the struggle to subdue nature, and the majesty of the large open spaces. It is the life of the Veld, caught up in mock fashion in *A Veld Eclogue*, that has given birth to his muse ; it is the consciousness of significant and momentous change that has nourished it.

Let me put a question to the reader. Has he ever found himself wondering what exactly was our ancestors' outlook upon life and the world at large ? What meaning had this universe for them before anything that was known of evolution or relativity ; before electricity had been harnessed and before our scientists had discovered the astonishing age of the earth ? The world must have appealed to the poet in a totally different way. To-day we are conscious of an indefinable power and force behind things, which the writer of Elizabethan times, one feels, could never have appreciated, and it is just this consciousness of power that is at the back of Mr. Campbell's poetry.

" My life has been the enemy of slumber," he declares in the dedicatory epistle to *Adamastor*, and indeed lethargy is the very last thing we could ever associate with Mr. Campbell and his work. His mind is pre-eminently agile and his verses are pulsating with abundant energy. The first of his works of any consequence, *The Flaming Terrapin* (1924), is driven along, as it were, by a rushing, torrential strength, animated by a mocking irony which is almost Byronic. Take as an example this excerpt which tells of Leviathan rearing himself up to greet the sun :

Perched on the stars around him in the air,
White angels rinsed the moonlight from their hair,
And the drowned trees into new flowers unfurled
As it sank dreaming down upon the world.
As he rolled by, all evil things grew dim.
The Devil, who had scoffed now slunk from him
And sat in Hell, dejected and alone,
Rasping starved teeth against an old dry bone."

Of what is it reminiscent, if not of *The Vision of Judgment*?

The Flaming Terrapin, however, is by no means Mr. Campbell's best satirical piece, it is full of obvious weaknesses, and in places becomes somewhat enigmatic; but it showed him in what direction his genius lay. *The Wayzgoose* (1928) and *The Georgiad* are far cleverer pieces of work in which the author has caught exactly the manner of Dryden and Pope, lashing our twentieth-century Grub Street as they lashed theirs, and with as little tolerance or mercy. Both are, in effect, modern *Dunciads*, but with this difference; Dryden and Pope both had to create a fictitious literary senate for their purpose; Mr. Campbell found an actual one ready to his hand, for the Wayzgoose, it appears, is an annual assembly of the poets and poetasters of South Africa held at Cape Town; and it is thither we are conducted. Of course, the object is to ridicule the whole affair, and ridicule it Mr. Campbell does in true eighteenth-century style. His sting can be as sharp as Pope's ever was (though there is nothing of the pettiness of the Popean satire about his poem); his heroic couplets are as polished, his antitheses as pointed, and his deliberate tricks of bathos as effective. But in one respect at least he differs from his Augustan prototype. The author of *The Dunciad* never really succeeded in vitalizing his characters; they remain mere names and no more. Mr. Campbell, on the other hand, has infused life into dead bones. His figures really do live, which means, of course, that the satire is the more destructive since it fells dunces of flesh and blood, and not mere dummies set up for it to tilt at.

The Georgiad, a spirited attack on the bards and reviewers of the last few years, many of whom are actually mentioned by name, is conceived in a similar vein, though the satire is not always so happy. If *MacFlecknoe* was an onslaught on Dullness, this is a satire on Mediocrity in art and literature:

> Hail, Mediocrity, beneath whose shell
> Lion and fox as loving neighbours dwell,
> While, like some Saturn of the age of Boost,
> The great Tu Quoque rules the golden roost,

Lulling the Muses with his drowsy boon,
While poets Fabianise the Sun and Moon
And for the equal favours of his throne
Contend in mediocrity alone.

The central figure is a certain Androgyno, a self-satisfied, egoistic, loquacious versifier, duller than the fictitious Shadwell of Dryden's poem, and perhaps, if he has any human original, as colossal a misrepresentation. For the great thing about Androgyno is that he accomplishes nothing. Now and again he persists in obtruding his presence, but every time he is successfully silenced until finally he sinks into oblivion—the ultimate fate, one supposes Mr. Campbell to imply, of many of our so-styled poets of the present day. And then there is also a passage of most acrid satire on modern nature poetry :

Now hawthorn blooms above the daisied slope
Where lovelorn poets after milkmaids grope,
Or troop whore-hunting down the country lanes
With flashing spectacles and empty brains,
To hang their trousers on the flowering spray
And sport with lousy gypsies in the hay.
Here Bulbo comes his amorous love to pass
Tickled by spiders on a lump of grass ;
And sure, what blushing milkmaid would despise
Humpty's great belly and protruding eyes,
Who in his verses plainly has revealed
That when he ogles every maid must yield !
If they should fail to win the joys they sing,
Or get a cuff to make their ear-drums ring,
It makes no difference, they forgive the crime
And finish off the merry feat in rhyme—
Editors are the softest go-betweens—
All maids are willing in the magazines.

All this, no doubt, is very clever if somewhat unsavoury ; yet one cannot help feeling that Mr. Campbell is a little too sweeping in his satire, for though we may admit that the world is plagued with little rhymsters who imagine themselves poets (for that matter, it always has been ; the modern age is no exception) we must also concede what Mr. Campbell seems unwilling to concede—that there are writers living to-day who can never be put in that category. That Mr. Campbell does put them therein reflects no whit on them, for they will survive his censures when their lesser contemporaries are forgotten; but it does reflect on the satirist's powers of discrimination. Perhaps the truth of the matter is to be found summed up in one of his own epigrams, in which he has, almost unwittingly, seized upon the weak spot in so many of his verses. It is called *Home Thoughts in Bloomsbury*:

> Of all the clever people round me here
> I most delight in me—
> Mine is the only voice I care to hear,
> And mine the only face I care to see.

It is brief, but it hits the nail upon the head. Mr. Campbell is suffering from a disease common among satirists—egotism. Some of his admirers, no doubt, would prefer to call it by the euphemism *individuality*; but designate it as we will, it remains a blemish upon his work, and cannot but be deplored.

Personally I feel that Mr. Campbell becomes a much greater poet when he ceases to exercise his ingenuity and sarcasm, and in their stead adopts a simpler and a calmer strain, for then his egotism vanishes and the world and the life around him, not his own self, become the absorbing interests. If *The Sisters* is fired with a burning intensity of feeling, and *Horses on the Camargue* characterized by strength and majesty, *The Secret Muse* bears witness to the author's consciousness of a world beyond the material, more real than that of time and space, which appears never once in the satires; and it is no mere poetaster who can write such a delicate piece as the *Sleeper*:

> She lies so still, her only motion
> The waves of hair that round her sweep
> Revolving to their hushed explosion
> Of fragrance on the shores of sleep.
> Is it my spirit or her flesh
> That takes this breathless, silver swoon?
> Sleep has no darkness to enmesh
> That lonely rival of the moon,
> Her beauty vigilant and white.

That wakeful through the long blue night,
Watches, with my own sleepless eyes,
The darkness silver into day,
And through their sockets burns away
The sorrows that have made them wise.

There is nothing artificial about this ; on the contrary it is an example of finished artistry, animated by genuine feeling and emotion. That sense of spirituality, the soul of all great poetry, in which the *Georgiad* is so conspicuously lacking, is an essential of this piece ; and it is so with most of Mr. Campbell's lyrical poems. *The Gum Tree*, with its precise and clear-cut phraseology, is a masterpiece of description, but it is a symbolic poem, too, for in the towering trees, reaching high up towards the blue above them, where all is free and clear, the writer seems to see humanity striving to liberate itself from the material things which hold it to earth. Even *Choosing a Mast* is pervaded by the same wholesome spirit ; the pine tree signifies aspiration, and in its fragrance, grace, beauty and strength, in its steadfastness against the blustering winds and the music of its swaying in the breeze, is epitomized the very soul of nature.

Yet even this simple nature poetry is not devoid altogether of the characteristics of the satires, for that fervent attachment to precision and exactness of form which we find in *The Wayzgoose* and *The Georgiad* expresses itself here as clear-cut imagery. The descriptions are always finely finished, the impressions very definite, while oftentimes there is something of a statuesque appearance about the pictures, which we get in the works of few other modern poets. The idyllic haziness of Drinkwater, the repose of Blunden, the fantasy of De La Mare, are alike foreign to Mr. Campbell, for where these three are akin in spirit to the painter or the musician, who is mainly interested in giving us atmosphere, and works often by suggestion, Mr. Campbell has more affinity with the sculptor. A reviewer of *Adamastor* expressed the opinion that one of the most significant pieces in the whole book was that entitled *Mass at Dawn* ; and true it is that in this poem is exemplified as clearly as anywhere, the author's method of verbal artistry:

> I dropped my sail and dried my dripping seines,
> Where the white quay is chequered by cool planes
> In whose great branches, always out of sight,
> The nightingales are singing day and night.
> Though all was grey beneath the moon's grey beam,
> My boat in her new paint shone like a bride,
> And silver in my baskets shone the bream;
> My arms were tired, and I was heavy-eyed,
> But when with food and drink, at morning light,
> The children met me at the water-side,
> Never was wine so red, or bread so white.

Of course, there is a unity of impression about this piece; but actually it is not so much a single picture as a series of pictures, each one neatly finished off, and one feels that the poet could have gone on adding to them without in any way impairing the ultimate effect. For our attention is centred only on one at a time, and that quite clearly-defined and independent—an entity in itself. And so it is with everything in the natural scene by which Mr. Campbell is impressed. Blue hazy hills, undulating and vanishing away in the distance, have no charm for him; nor have panoramas of colours. But the pine trees which stand out clear and strong against the sky can win his affection at once; and winter, with its gaunt barrenness, gives him the inspiration that he can never draw from the mingled profusion of summer:

> I love to see, when leaves depart,
> The clear anatomy arrive,
> Winter, the paragon of art,
> That kills all forms of life and feeling
> Save what is pure and will survive.

So he writes in the opening stanza of *Autumn.*

To the modern world there are two possible methods of approach, the intellectual, and the emotional, and the problem of the poet is to unite them. Now Mr. Campbell is first and foremost an intellectual poet, and as has been the case so often with this type of writer, his intellect frequently leads him into cynicism. *The Theology of*

Bongwi the Baboon, for instance, voices the usual cry of the rationalist and the agnostic that God is merely a fictitious creation of the mind, the conception of Whom must of necessity vary from age to age and from race to race, while *A Song for the People*, with its picture of humanity as :

> A monster whom the drunken gods have maimed
> And set upon a road that has no goal,

seems unnecessarily brutal and callous. But there is another side to Mr. Campbell's work which must not be overlooked. That emotion is not absent from his nature is testified by a few pieces of surpassing beauty, and this, allied to his wide vocabulary, his keenly analytical mind, and his athletic versification, should place him definitely amongst the ranks of the most promising of our younger poets.[1]

A writer of still a different type is to be found in Mr. Wallace B. Nichols, who is perhaps better known to the average person as a novelist than a poet, though his work in verse has been by no means inconsiderable. For several years he had contributed occasional pieces to periodicals, including *The Westminster Gazette* (in the days when that paper was still an independent journal) and THE POETRY REVIEW, but it was in 1921 that his first volume, *Jericho Street and Selected Poems* appeared. This was followed by *Earl Simon*, a poetic-dramatic trilogy centring around the magnetic personality of Simon de Montfort (1922), *The Glory of the World*, a poetic play of Roman Britain (1924), *Prometheus in Piccadilly* (1927), *The Song of Sharruk* (1930),[2] and *Saint Caedmon's Feast* (1933), while from time to time, verses have appeared in a number of literary periodicals and magazines. This, briefly, is the record of Mr. Nichol's work as a poet. It remains now for us to ask ourselves : what are its outstanding characteristics ?

Twice Mr. Nichols has stated his conception of the function of the poet ; once in *A Song before Sunset*, which appeared in his first volume, and again in the third stasimon of *Prometheus in Piccadilly*, and though in the course of the fourteen years that elapsed between them (for *A Song before Sunset* was written in 1913) the author seems to have shifted his ground a little, they may be regarded as complementary one of the other :

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[1] Though I must say that R. L. Mégroz (*op. cit.*) seems to be overstating the case when he places such emphasis on the " blaze of elemental colour " which he claims to find in the greater part of Mr. Campbell's work.

[2] Though an earlier version had appeared in 1916.

Free and strong and calm be the poet !
Let him love woman and show it
In the dawn of his day ;
But as noon draws nigh
Let him, with one last sigh,
Put the dawn-dream away,
And stand, alone and austere,
Listening for trumpets afar,
And girt for the onset
Of the hour that is near—
The hour of sunset
And the large star.

This is a high conception, and most of the really great poets would probably endorse it. Certainly none of them, in their achievement, would fall far short of it ; but at the same time it is the measure of Mr. Nichols' failure in a great part of his verse. Only occasionally does he reach these lofty standards. He may, indeed, be listening for the trumpets afar ; no-one can question that ; but does he succeed in catching their note ? In one or two pieces he does, but only too often one feels that he is straining every nerve to detect what is still not quite distinguishable to him.

His second definition is simpler and less ambitious, yet it is none the less important, for it strikes the keynote to much that he has written. Put briefly, it is nothing more nor less than realism :

'Tis for the poet to create
  The moth as duly as the star,
To understudy sovran Fate,
  And sing of all things as they are.

The sordid and the splendid keep
  One feast alike upon his page ;
There must the shallows mock the deep,
  And there the fool o'ercrow the sage.

Ask no more then but a song of youth
  And glamour from the poet's heart;
He only sings a demi-truth
  Who sets false limits to his art.

Whether this is an acceptable definition of poetry is open to question. There is a difference between singing of all things as they are, and singing of all things that are. But it is the definition advanced by Mr. Nichols, and it is the definition to which he tries to conform in every poem that he has written. Before everything else his object is to tear from life the veil of romantic illusion, and reveal it in its reality, be it beautiful or shocking, noble or ignoble; and often Mr. Nichols finds it more shocking than beautiful.

The method is seen in the title-poem of his first volume, *Jericho Street*, where he takes us through a typical, suburban, middle-class street, and offers us a "peep behind the scenes" into the lives of some of its inhabitants. The picture is a comprehensive one. The clerk, the doctor, the poor curate, the prostitute, the rebellious daughter, the dying sinner, the over-worked servant, the drunkard, the murderer, and a host of others are all brought before us, and their secret lives revealed. Jericho Street, one supposes, is what would ordinarily be regarded as a respectable residential quarter; yet what a variety of types it has to show; what poignant stories are enacted behind those walls; what tragedies have seared the human souls there. The whole poem is pervaded with an atmosphere of gloom, pessimism and cynicism, from which Mr. Nichols can never quite free himself. At number 235 lives a musical genius, whose soul is enchanted by the sound of one single bar of Beethoven; yet he is linked to a wife whose thoughts can rise no higher than the matter-of-fact and material.

He has played the "Hammerclavier" through
And still his kindled thoughts pursue
The final movement's devious maze;
And still he sits, with far-off gaze,
At the piano's glimmering keys;
A visionary light he sees,
And the inmost soul of him is stirred.
He whispers reverently one word,

"Beethoven!" that one mighty name,
And turns to catch his wife's exclaim
At a dropped stitch, and then to hear,
"Would you like pork on Sunday, dear?"

Bathetic? Incongruous? Yes, certainly; but then to Mr. Nichols that is just how life itself appears.

Amongst these character sketches there are some which show a surprising psychological insight, allied to a power of terse and forceful expression. Now and again, it is true, we come across a rather groteque lapse from poetic decorum, as when we learn that a doctor attended a patient,

Until her rose-dark womanhood
Stirred unprofessionally his blood;

but on the other hand there are lines as felicitous as these are ludicrous.

Such are the general characteristics of *Jericho Street*, a poem novel in conception, though unequal in execution. It is by far the longest poem (or rather series of poems) in the volume, and it communicates its tone to the rest. In these sophisticated days we have become accustomed to look for a philosophy in our poets: Mr. Nichols has a philosophy, though as may be expected, it is inclined towards cynicism. It is, in fact, a philosophy of disillusion, of melancholy and of disappointment in life, based on the consciousness of the transience of all that is beautiful.

We follow butterflies, chase them madly,
To catch but air, and turn home sadly.
And should we brush one wing a little,
'Twould kill, for loveliness is brittle,
And cannot live beyond the smutching,
But withers at the lightest touching.

That is the moral that he draws from the spectacle of a girl of ten playing and frolicking joyously in the meadows, and the same note is struck in many more of his verses; yet in *An April Madrigal* he can move so far away from this attitude as to declare that "all is his who sings and dares."

Mr. Nichols has been tutored in the school of Thomas Hardy; even in his happiest production, there is present a note of wistful regret, and always he is conscious of the evil and sorrow in the world ; but now and again we detect another strain which gives him a footing in a different school of modern writers. I mean a flavour of romance, present conspicuously in at least two of his poems. *The Red Inn* (1920), a fantasy of the old smuggling days, is a piece that would grace any anthology :

With noiseless foot down Mermaid Street,
When night is quit of the moon and free,
From lamp to lamp, where the shadows meet,
I have mixed with dead men, in from the sea.

And ghostly kegs from the Camber Sands
Came o'er the marsh with ear-ringed knaves ;
And these hands toiled beside phantom hands
To stow them snug in the red inn's cave.

Then up the cliff to the black-beamed bar,
Where a lanthorn swung o'er a Sussex jade ;
" How far have ye come, good seamen how far ? "
" Lass, never thou mind ; and here's to the Trade."

The atmosphere is perfect, the rhythm smooth and flowing. Not a discordant note is sounded, and the impression of supernaturalism which pervades the whole is cunningly produced by means which are all but imperceptible until the piece is closely examined. Of course, the appeal is to the imagination. Romance of another kind, however, appears in *Sir Guyon*, where mediaevalism is blended with a most vivid and tense description of a storm :

He sees the lightning flood the sky,
He hears the thunder crash on high,
He feels the wind against his face,
But slackens not his pace

The rain is bitter, weird, and cold,
But through its veil he sees the gold
Of the great stars drip silently
Into the sombre sea.

And through the storm's titanic song—
Wild as the threnody of wrong—
He hears round distant moonlight caves
The splashing of calm waves.

This is not quite so perfect as the previous piece. Not that the poet does not succeed in creating a unity of impression, or atmosphere; he certainly does, but the last line of each stanza, a line of only three feet where all the rest are of four, strikes a jarring note of discord. These little blemishes which mar a poem otherwise meritorious seem to be one of Mr. Nichols' persistent failings, and from his earliest to his latest volume he has never been able to free himself from them entirely. Consequently only a very few of his verses are faultless. Sometimes it is a metrical irregularity that offends, sometimes an unhappily chosen figure of speech, or sometimes an awkward rhyme—something that is quite trivial in itself, but enough to destroy the effect of a poem. *An April Madrigal* (1915), for instance, is a piece full of exquisite melody which reminds one of the happy springtide songs of John Drinkwater; but an unfortunate trick of repetition in the last verse spoils it as an example of literary craftsmanship. In the same way *The Astronomer* is marred by bathos; and such circumlocutions as "focussed tube," for a telescope, hardly strike one as poetic. Even the Augustans, who invariably spoke of "the woolly breed," "the finny tribe," and "the feathered choir," would have stood aghast at such an expression as this.

Yet in one sense Mr. Nichols bears a certain resemblance to the Augustans; or at least to the later representatives of that school. The eighteenth century precursors of romanticism, such as Shenstone, Thomas and Joseph Warton and Mark Akenside found their inspiration in the works of former English poets—Milton and Spenser especially—and set out deliberately to cultivate their style. Now it is just the same with Mr. Nichols. Reading through his several volumes of verses, one detects obvious traces of the influence of the great poets of the nineteenth century, as well as of Milton. It takes only a cursory reading of *Invitation* (1915) to see the source of its inspiration—*L'Allegro*. Both the subject and the metre are obviously Miltonic.

> Friend and maiden, come thou down
> To this pasture-cinctured town;

> Lay awhile thy tasks aside,
> Here are peace and dreams' high-tide.

So the poem opens. Then we get a passage of rural description, a veritable pageant of colour, with detail piled upon detail; but this is less in the genuine vein of Milton than of his eighteenth-century imitator, John Dyer.

> Let the bells of wisest Folly
> Fright the spectre, Melancholy,
> To incurable decline!
> Here are fields that flash and shine,
> Large, autumnal, wet and green,
> Vivid with their rainy sheen;
> Windy trees with leafage mellow,
> Brown and red and dim and yellow,
> Dark and pale—a myriad tints
> Filled with rays and watery glints.

The pseudo-Miltonic appears elsewhere in the poems also. *An Ode to Summer* has something of the luxurious, vapourish atmosphere of Keats, while *To a Swallow* is saturated with reminiscences of Swinburne[1].

By far the longest single poem which Mr. Nichols has ever written is *The Song of Sharruk* which tells how a young bard, tired of singing of make-belief, determined that he would gain first-hand experience of the glamour and glory of war, to celebrate it later in his verses. So he joins the host of his king and goes into battle; but when he comes to write his poem it tells, not of war's glory, but of its horrors. In parts *The Song of Sharruk* rises to heights of true poetic grandeur; the language is powerful, and there is no doubt of the burning conviction which is behind it. But, again, it is marred here and there by ruggedness and irregularity of metre, a fault which obtrudes itself again in *Love in Sussex* and several other pieces. Even *Prometheus in Piccadilly* suffers from it occasionally. This last production, a union of epic, dramatic and lyric verse, a fusion of classical mythology and symbolism with modern life, is, one imagines, unique of its kind, and therefore worth serious study by any student of present-day literature. Unfortunately space prevents our entering into a detailed discussion of it here, but put in brief, it is the story of the reception of the god Prometheus in one of the main thoroughfares of London, and his surprise at the apparent degeneracy of the human race, which has no place for a deity, and can only abuse everthing he once bestowed upon it for a blessing. The comparison which Professor Banerjee has drawn with parts of *The Testament of Beauty*[1] is an ambitious one—too ambitious perhaps; but Mr. Nichols' poem cannot be lightly dismissed. One can, of course, challenge the basic assumption that nothing in life should be considered unfit for poetic treatment, and if he does so he will find a great deal of support for his argument in certain passages of *Prometheus in Piccadilly* which are written completely in cockney, with a liberal sprinkling of oaths and blasphemies. I may be very old fashioned and conservative in these matters, but personally I cannot persuade myself that there is much poetic about this kind of thing ; but still, as I have touched on the question already in dealing with the work of the Poet Laureate, I will say no more about it here. There are other, and more commendable aspects of the poem that should be stressed. Mr. Nichols can certainly create impression and atmosphere, and like some Old Testament Prophet he can voice an indictment of modern worldliness, which goes to the very heart of the matter. Until the appearance of his most recent work, *Prometheus in Piccadilly* represented the summit of his achievement.[2]

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[1] Though one line at least, i.e. "Again thou twitterest in the accustomed eaves" seems copied from Gray's *Elegy*. As early as 1909 Mr. Nichols had produced an Elegy on Swinburne under the title *Date Lilia*.

Mr. Nichols is one of those poets whose works require judicious selection. A writer of the first order he certainly is not ; there are too many irregularities in his verses, and oftentimes the thought is far from profound. Like Tennyson in the Victorian age, he is alive to the challenging and burning questions of his time, but like Tennyson too, his so called philosophy too frequently becomes merely a quasi-philosophy, or a poetic repetition of commonplace views. Yet some few of his poems ought to be better known than they are. *To A Starving Bird* is a model of condensation and restraint. Devoid of all mawkish sentiment, it is charged with a depth of real pathos and feeling. And now and again the author slips into a happy phraseology which bespeaks a genius for expressing the intangible.

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[1] In an article on Robert Bridges, printed in *The Calcutta Review*, June 1930. See e specially page 419.

[2] It has been produced at the Albert Hall, when the part of Zeus was taken by Mr. Lewis Casson.

> Along the pavement, all around,
> Time's old, original silence broods.

That is his description of night in a deserted London Street. *The Ode to Summer* speaks of " the honeyed heats of spring," a phrase with a wealth of imagery in it, while in the verses *To a Swallow* the bird comes " out of the lyric south into the sober north." The adjectives here are particularly appropriate ; they indicate exactly the characters of the southern and the northern lands. But even more striking is the epigrammatic force which now and again emerges from his lines :

> Woman flings everywhere a rose to man,
> But all man ever catches is the thorns.

Could anything be more succinct than this ? It shows that Mr. Nichols may yet become a poet of no mean order if only his verse is less erratic. Indeed, his latest work, *Saint Caedmon's Feast*, a short dramatic poem centring around a supposed interview between Queen Mary and Lady Jane Grey, already shows signs of a maturing genius. There is a certain majestic strength about the blank verse, a forcefulness in the economy of language, which makes it one of the best pieces of work that he has yet done. The poetic drama has never found many devotees in the present century, but this piece is assuredly proof that it is by no means dead or decadent. As for the position that Mr. Nichols will occupy in the eyes of posterity, that is difficult to estimate, for the years play strange pranks with literary fame. But this can be said with confidence ; that when, after the lapse of some few decades, time has done its work and the anthology makers begin to compile representative collections from the poetry of the early twentieth century, some of his lyrics will certainly find a place there.

FREDERICK T. WOOD.

COLD APRIL

WHITE as whipped cream the homesteads crouch
Under skies now northern-pale and now
A deeply southern blue ;
Clouds of shadowed silver ice let through
A fringe, a bloom, a blur, of falling rain.

See, as the acres merge behind,
How only the willows' drifting yellow tresses
Upon the cold airs lean,
The wood unthickened by its thin-set green
Save where each hawthorn quakes, a gush of leaf.

JANET URQUHART.

SADNESS IN SPRING

LEAVES and pale blossom falling
In the wind of May,
Green and white snow,
A melancholy cuckoo calling,
Far away,
Insistent, slow,
And the chill smell which follows after rain.
Faint through the sombre dusk lament again
Lovers who died a thousand years ago ;
All disillusioned youth weeping to know
How, deep in beauty's heart, lies hidden pain.

E. M. SADLER.

THE ROYAL ROAD TO TARTARY

THERE are no watchposts now to guard the way,
No sounds of rustling flutes or ringing bells
Going before the royal son of heaven,
For, on the Emperor's road, a Yesterday
Has died. Instead, the eerie deathlike knells,
Mourning from slender cypresses, hold sway.
And smallest leaf, and inconsiderable dust
(That, lest it mar the pageant from Pekin,
Was ruthless swept from off the way, or hurled
To air) now lie in formless drifted heaps.
For progress of to-day, worst in the world
This road is, where the old East nodding, sleeps.

MOLLIE TATUM.

GUEST

"HOW will death come ?" he asked his visitor,
"I have so often wondered in what guise,
And they who know, we cannot question them,
But I am curious. You must have asked
Yourself this question too, wondered at times ?"

"Not as proud morning comes," his guest replied,
"Sending her heralds to prepare the earth,
Flashing her signals to responding hills,
Wakening all silence with unclouded song.
Not as expected guest will this guest come
To a warm hearth and books and flowers prepared,
But quietly, opening your door, perhaps
Hardly perceived," he smiled, "as I have come
Placing chair beside you, as I have done,
Talking awhile with you, as I have done,
Meeting your eyes and smiling, as I do now,
Touching your hand—like this . . . Ah ! now you know.
Come ! we must go out together. . . ."

BERESFORD RICHARDS.

SONNET FOR KATHERINE MANSFIELD

(*After visiting her Villa Isola-Bella, Mention-Garavan*)

DOWN by your gate I found this yellow flower,
Its wistful beauty breathing thoughts of you.
Your garden still remembers. Trees that grew
And lived beside you once, now weave a bower
For memory, enfolding each dead hour
Within their quiet boughs. They murmur through
Pale leaves—soft fragments of the dreams you knew,
And shed your presence, subtle shower on shower.

Your dreams live on—although they say you died
Far from this garden that you loved so well.
I only know you walked with me beside
To-day's strange beauty till pale shadows fell
In pensive silhouette, and dusk denied
The golden glory of our citadel.

EVELYN COUCHMAN.

CHALLENGE

TO Paestum's ashen altars, faded faith,
And to all wandering wraiths of worshippers,
To battered vessels of each Attic shape,
To all Lost Art, rubrics and gothic runes,
And of flown nightingales, flown tunes.
To silent songs of wise men, vast loneliness
Of Overman,
And to His alabaster box of emptiness ;

To ancient manners of the gentle heart,
Quaint courtesies and chivalry and prayer,
To the less ancient but still rare
Traditionary loves of the traditionary fair ;

To all kept doubts of creeds that satiate,
But most of all, to all kept faith,
Stand Youth, and pledge remembrance !
Raise your thin glasses of new shape
Full of new wine—drink deep—
And pour libations from your laughing soul
Into all ancient loveliness—
An old, and golden, and unbroken bowl.

LUCY MUNSON TAYLOR

TREES IN THE WIND

IN friendliness, in happiness,
With outstretched arms of joyousness
They shout for joy across the fields,
I hear them shout for joy !

In earnestness, in wantonness,
In purest truth and thankfulness
They clap their hands and toss their heads
And fling their hair to earth !

And then in pure harmoniousness,
In mellow frank melodiousness
They sing their love, they sing their love,
I hear their songs of love !

OLIVE BAXENDALE.

RETROSPECT

GREY of antiquity surround us,
Leave us not yet.
Lest we forget,
And modern symmetry confound us.
I would not check man's self-expression ;
Although in Sim's
And Epstein limbs,
There is a strange and vast digression
From ancient themes of grace and pleasure.
Yet while I view
Vast structures new,
And skyscrapers conformed to measure,
Abode of commerce, pleasing, spacious,
And well-planned street ;
My weary feet
Still bear me on to watch the gracious
Grey buildings of the past, reposing
Impassive, strong,
Their shadows long,
When busy day has reached its closing.

EIRENE F. CARTER.

ETCHING OF GEORGE ELIOT

LIKENED to Savonarola was her face
Too long from brow to chin, with high cheek bones
Frail waxen-smooth—old ivory's mellowed tones—
Forehead too short for fairness. Brushed in place
Straight black hair parted o'er a furrowed space
Narrowed between keen eyes—deep burning stones—
Tired by thinking. The soul of man atones
For beauty scarred that heals anew with grace.

Hers the misfortune, then, to love too well
A man she was to find already wed.
Victorian England bowed in awe—was led
Outside convention breathing in the spell
Of words to be remembered which she said. . . .
For over all who read her genius fell.

CAROLINE PARKER SMITH.

ASTRONOMER

HE did not set his clock by earthy dials,
Checking the hours off from twelve to one;
But measured time in the unmeasured miles
That trickle down in light-years from the sun.
It was not curious he was aloof
From small routine, and made the dinner wait;
This man, who used the heavens for a roof,
Could find but small concern in what he ate.
So others yielded to his strange caprice
For tracking stars, knowing his mortal ear
Was tuned to whirring asteroids in space;
And, branding him a little more than queer,
They ate their clocked meals in a mundane place,
And left him in his lonely stratosphere.

He had grown intimate with moon and star,
Undaunted by their proud indifference.
He knew their journeys, and their calendar;
Nor felt it savoured of impertinence
To chart the infinite into a pattern,
To study star-demeanour through a lens,
Finding the steady faith of Mars and Saturn
A little more reliable than men's.
There lay the trouble: when he tried to fit
This giant yard-stick to the fluttering ways
Of humankind, it would not work at all.
He who had nobnobbed with the infinite,
Could ill reduce the light-years into days,
Find truth in men, or anything so small.

Death found him very much pre-occupied,
For he had given scanty thought to leaving.
He had heard talk: this one, or that, had died;
But he had been too busy to learn grieving.
A dissolution gave him small concern;
There seemed so little *dying* in all matter;
Rather a question as to what might turn
To what, when stars would come to birth or shatter.
Far less a stranger than he comes to most,
Death came to him who stalked infinity,

Who mapped and measured, with but feeble light,
The measureless. That nothing could be lost,
Belonged to his vast cyclic theory,
Which gave no credence to an empty night.

EDITH MIRICK.

THE QUEST

THERE was a man who sought for God
In every field and fell he trod,
And in the many, twisted trees,
And the magenta, white-lipp'd seas.
From every hue and every hill,
From the wan leaves of the daffodil
Left when the yellow flowers were cull'd,
He sought Him with an eye now dull'd ;
And in the hills, like vapour blue
In the metled noon, he sought Him too ;
And a wild, sudden, hopeful spark
Lit his sad eyes, then left them dark.
In cleanly inns and in the wood
By bobbin mills, he never could
See Whom he sought ; but still his feet
Walk'd, walk'd, and walk'd, and his heart beat
Sometimes with hope's quick unbelief,
And then stopp'd beating from mere grief.
And then one day God came to him,
Not as the ash-tree bare and slim
That he had look'd at ; not as the field
Where he had walk'd, to find reveal'd
God's friendliness ; not as the hill
He hoped the beauty of God would fill—
But simply God. He was afraid ;
And he turn'd back, and would have stay'd
By the wan leaves of the daffodil,
And by the melted hills of noon,
Or the cold stream, or the cold moon,
Or the cleanly inn, or by the stone
Beside the road when he was alone.
He turn'd back to the gates and roofs,
And the fields trodden by cows' hoofs.

T. E. CASSON.

COLLATED BIOGRAPHY AND CRITICISM

THE public, weary of intricate sex-novels, is turning, we are told, to stories of clever detectives who unravel a baffling mystery by a sleuth-hound following up of minute clues. *Early Lives of Milton*, edited by Helen Darbyshire (Constable) is a veritable literary detection. By penmanship and peculiarities of spelling, and, what we might term, inward evidence, she has settled (for her own part, at least), who it was that wrote the anonymous life of Milton. This book should become, for admirers of that great-souled man, a very valuable work. The arduous researches of the editress gives the reader confidence in her assertion that John Phillips, Milton's nephew, was the author. This same John Phillips is invariably called the "scapegrace nephew," but without any very particular evidence of this gracelessness. He wrote some broad and rather dirty verse, but who did not in those days ? Rabelais was still the great wit.

In the Introduction the editress speaks of "Phillips, with his incurably coarse mind." Following her own method of induction, it is curious that in this biography he displays no trace of his "incurable coarseness." On the contrary, he writes with a quiet justness and sympathetic good-heartedness rarely to be found in one who had been lectured and flogged by his subject. At a much later date Horace Walpole wrote to his feminine friends certain things he considered would "amuse" them, things which we now consider oddly "coarse." Our speech if not our moralities have changed.

John Phillips (if it be John Phillips) gives a delightful touch in relating Milton's ancestry :

> "Mr. John Milton—is said to be descended from an antient Knight Family—However that bee, his Father was entitled to a true Nobility in the Apostle Paul's Heraldry ; having been disinherited about ye beginning of Queen Elizabeth's reign by his Father a Romanist,—for reading the Bible."

His accounts of Milton—as he lived—proves that Anthony à Wood selected such portions of it as he chose in writing his accounts, and we can perceive he was guided more by his political animus than by a desire for accuracy. The publisher calls it " his honest Cavalier rancour," but we have yet to discover a " rancour " that is " honest." We who have known a politician besmirched as profligate by reason of his misunderstood charity have ever taken at their face value the aspersions cast on this greater Englishman. The truth is summed up in John Phillips' words : Milton " was not linked to one Party by self-interest, so neither was hee divided from the other by Animosity." This verdict is equally applicable to his debated Divorce Treatises. These arose as much from the desire to save the face of his silly wife as to gratify his legitimate desire of gaining a fit help-meet. For consider, when by a trick this absconding wife throws herself on his mercy, how nobly he re-instates her, how without " honest rancour," in daily intercourse occasionally " satyrical " we can well imagine, but always " extreme pleasant " in conversation.

Personally, we consider the pity lavished upon his daughters to be unmerited by them. A little patient study would soon have enabled them to understand what they read : they probably inherited the light foolishness of their mother. Anthony à Wood barely mentions Milton's domestic affairs, and the worst he can put forward against the poet is—that

> " he became a great Anti-monarchist—and at length arrived to that monstrous and unparall'd height of profligate impudence, as in print to justify the most execrable Murder of him the best of Kings."

Comment on this is needless, save to marvel at the word " profligate " which never at any time was applicable to Milton. Wood also becomes excited over the poet's answer to the *Eikon Basilike*, " the portraiture (he says) of his sacred Majesty in his Sollitudes and Sufferings," and that the *Iconoclastes* was published " to the horror of all sober men."

With regard to this forged " portraiture of his sacred Majesty," Toland's life (included in this book) gives a most lucid and interesting account of the *Eikon Basilike*, asserting that both Charles II and his brother knew that it was not written by their father. Toland adds, caustically, of Charles II, that:

> " he was really of neither Church, but believed the Pretences of both to be Credulity or Craft, and that the transactions of his last Minutes were only the effects of a weak Mind in a distempered Body."

Jonathan Richardson adds his life, and he quaintly says that he was assisted in all the Latin writings of his hero by his son, as he, Jonathan, knew no Latin. That Milton was his hero is all to his praise, but his manner of spotting his pages with unnecessary capital letters is most trying. Nevertheless he makes his points, as when he says:

> " Milton appears to have had a Natural Greatness, Warmth and Vigour of Mind—This Blazes wherever he goes from One End of his Life to the other. Such Minds are apt to take Strong and Deep Impressions; and as He was Fully persuaded he was Engag'd in the Cause of God, and of Liberty, he exerted every Nerve. if *Hercules* Grapples with *Anteus*, Ceremony is Forgotten, the Bones must Crash."

Now this, apart from the nice derangement of capitals, is quite understanding on Jonathan's part. We confess to enjoying the idea that " ceremony is forgotten " when you crush or crash your opponent's bones.

This volume, together with its able Introduction, tempts us to more detailed notes, did space permit. The important issue is, what picture of John Milton do we retain from its pages? A wholly desirable one, as of a man who never spared himself in his toil to attain knowledge, but may have forgotten, perhaps, that two young nephews were unlikely to share his ardour. A man of strong and incorruptible opinions who, yet, could so far put them on one side in order to assist his enemies whenever possible; possessing a stern morality, puritan, if you choose—the word has no terrors for us—yet a cheerful serene companion; one of whom it might far more truly be said—" he nothing common did or mean " than of the king he resisted. Patient in much suffering, " hee was not ever observed to be very impatient," and leaving life " with so little pain or Emotion, that the time of his expiring was not perceiv'd by those in the room." No doubt his strong feelings may have sometimes led him into errors; what man is immune from this? Also the mightiness of his pen may have too deeply scratched his opponents. Great intellects are not complaisant with stupidity.

We have only to add that no lover of a great and noble Englishman will consider his library complete until *Early Lives of Milton* is included.

With *Early Lives of Milton* should be included a very learned work on *Paradise Lost* (*Milton and Paradise Lost*, by N. Bögholm, Levin and Monksgaard, and Williams and Norgate). The accurate knowledge of English authors displayed by the author is surprising, and his seemingly intuitive grasp of Milton's character no less surprising in one not an Englishman. The note of appreciation is struck in the Preface—" The greater the personality embodying a past civilization the more powerful his message, the more insistent his call to a later age."

With this sense of Milton's value for " the soul of every cultivated reader," the author proceeds to dissect minutely the poem of *Paradise Lost*. He nobly rejects Dr. Johnson's dictum that the want of human interest is felt by saying that the great work " simply teems with human interest," but in this he is speaking from the standpoint of the student of " past civilization," and the enquirer into the spiritual and physical and theological matters of Milton's age. Dr. Johnson referred to the interest in mere men and women and their actions. Justice cannot possibly be done sufficiently to this work in a short review. Mr. N. Bögholm seizes upon almost every paragraph of the poem and illustrates from all such, Milton's attitude toward disobedience, vanity, rebellion and also to the theological disputes of his day. Especially do we appreciate the sly humour of the sentence, " Obedience did not exactly come natural to Milton," and then he gives instances of the various occasions when Milton revolted against authority. Incidentally, however, we may consider that revolt may spring from obedience to a tender and sensitive conscience.

The Latin sources of words used by Milton are meticulously examined, also that his syntax bears the impression of classicism. The initial debt of our English poet to

Giamba Hista Andreini, who published his *L'Adamo* in 1613, is also examined. It may be that this ardent student cannot well conceive of any " cultured student " perusing *Paradise Lost* for the sole pleasure of its stately verse, but it is possible to admire a beautiful human figure without any profound knowledge of the bones and muscles that build up the perfect whole ; so that, whilst duly acknowledging the research of this important book we may, perhaps, be permitted to paraphrase Milton's own words, and say : " he also loves who only sits and reads."

To pass from the study of a great poet to the drama is not to make any very divergent step. Nearly every poet has written or attempted to write for the stage, and only a fine actor can give the poet's words their due significance, or interpret his thoughts by suitable actions. James Agate has " assembled " a number of criticisms into a volume, *English Dramatic Critics* (Arthur Barker, Ltd.). To read this book is to find oneself in delightful company ; here are specimens of Addison's somewhat stilted humour and poor Dick Steele's innate goodheartedness. Compare Steele's kindly expressed sorrow over the death of Betterton with that intolerable Leigh Hunt's notice of Ellison's demise, and his wretched joke in that we expect tragedians to die—" they are a grave people." Mr. Agate's own weekly criticisms are so vivid with wit and learning that we wish more of his own work had been included. In especial, it is a matter of regret that his age makes it impossible for him to have seen Duse, Bernhardt and Rejane in the zenith of their powers. With regard to Duse and Bernhardt, G. B. Shaw's article is perhaps the most sincere piece of work he has done. It may be that he was too young to put perpetually his tongue in his cheek or to insist upon his own cleverness. Here, speaking of Duse, he perceives the wonder of her living her parts not merely acting them. But out of an audience of a thousand spectators how many would recognize the exquisite entirety of Duse as contrasted with the theatrical powers of the rival actress ? Theatre-goers become hypnotized by the special idiosyncrasies of a favourite performer. Let a charming actress clench her hands and stamp her feet in a part and they are content to see her repeat these actions in every character she assumes, regardless of its appropriateness. Let an actor appear as a kindly well-bred gentleman once, and the audience see no absurdity in his still being this when he is representing a lying, mean, murderer. That is to say, in brief, that the " house " liked Irving to be always Irving, whether his label happened to be Faust or Romeo or Hamlet.

Among the most fascinating notices are those of the many Hamlets that have trod the stage. Personally, we desire to see a Hamlet who reveals that he was, as Mr. Agate says, " of an amiable, lively, and even sunny disposition " before the dreadful secret is revealed to him. What else could he have been to have fallen in love with pretty, docile, silly Ophelia? But he is usually represented as a gloomy youth, such as we see posing in a Soho restaurant, from the moment he appears. Whereas the contrast would infinitely increase the pathos, a happy lad suddenly becoming a monomaniac, a youth admiring his kingly father, loving his mother, and rejoicing in Ophelia, and then in a moment cast down from cheerful normality to becoming obsessed with a craving for revenge and the dogging fear that he is not man enough to accomplish it. But so many Hamlets look as if they had murdered (in a gentlemanly way) a dozen step-fathers before the play begins. Mr. Agate considers John Barrymore to have been nearer to Shakespeare's whole creation than any actor whom he has seen.

It is satisfying to read the penetrative insight with which Desmond MacCarthy deals with that strange, haunting play, *Uncle Vanya*, a play that could never be popular with the ordinary public by reason that it represents, as Desmond MacCarthy notes, " both the flatness and the poignancy of life." The tragedy lies in the seeming impossibility of altering it. Given these ordinary persons and the *flat* tragedy is inevitable, as inevitable as the Greek ones are, with this fundamental difference: the Greek tragedy grows out of circumstances, this of *Uncle Vanya* develops entirely out of personalities.

St. John Ervine's summing up on Clemence Dane's *Will Shakespeare* is acute and just. The distortion of probabilities was painfully evident; the Will Shakespeare depicted by the authoress was never our English Will.

One observes that critics grow more suave as time proceeds. To-day they do not declare of an actor that, " his action is crampt and disagreeable; his voice weak, coarse and inefficient "—or express astonishment that another should have " effrontery to appear." Did such plain-spoken critics remain on friendly terms with the performers they so lashed? We wonder.

Another pleasure James Agate has " assembled " for our reading is to hear Oliver Goldsmith—in his very tones, as it were—assert of an actor that his room was hung with twenty mirrors and therefore our sly Oliver dare swear: " he (the actor) saw twenty very ugly fellows wherever he looked." We have more polite criticism now in our day but we have lost something of the quaint sincerity of the older generations. It would be stimulating for us if an anonymous critic could see the modern plays and speak his mind under the cover of his pseudonym. Mr. Agate, perhaps, will assure us that he does speak his mind, so we must leave it at that.

ARTHUR HOOD.

BLOSSOM

NOW blossom clouds the cherry tree
And all the woods sing melody :
The meadows sing ; deep thickset lanes
Resound around with shrill refrains ;
Whereout, from hedges, glint sharp eyes
Of nestlings, poignant in surprise—
How bright the air ! How glad to be.
When blossoms shroud the cherry tree !

HENRY SLESSER.

ETERNAL TABOO

EDEN, the fragrant, bloomed in a valley whose walls
Rose verdantly round by round of hills to a height
Lost in a maze of cloud and pale verdure that melted
Into indefinite azure that might be sky or meadows full
Of five-petaled mountain flower. Hills smelt of balsam.
Breezes that wandered through canyons from unknown valleys
Carried hints of aloes and nutmeg. Never a harsh wind nor sudden,
Only a long voluptuous whirl from the south came gliding
And with invisible fingers bent the fronds of fernlike plants
That ancients called Ethera ; bent them down till the blossoms
Finding nowhere to hide, trembled in every translucent petal.

Colour-music, a melody for a river reed at twilight,
Made the only sound in the hills—except for whispers,
Murmurs of beings that haunted the narrow place
Between hills and Eden, their dwellings in moss-carpeted
Triangles of trees ; beings that never entered Eden, the fragrant.

Eden, shaped like a sleeping serpent, followed a river,
A musical flow trailing a path through loam soft to touch
As an ibis' throat. The river wound through fronded broom
And cane ; olives and silver figs, palms whose crested shafts
Signalled the stars. And underfoot, unnumbered blooms
Purple, rose, and ashen tint of plants enamoured of solitude
And a refuge of shielding stones. Over the river crept vines
That darkened their fingers in the stream, in among flowers,
Spiralling trunks of trees, festooned by south wind into garlands,
They crept slowly, hung heavily weighted by grapes and melons,
Each with a scent of its own that mingled and made the air
One glorious phial. Over Eden roamed creatures, graceful felines
The heavy-footed destined to burden-bearing ; silent ones
That dipped gleaming bodies in the mild stream ; feathered fore-runners
Of music ; and the mysterious lengths of limbless ease that made
Their way like broken vines, along tree branches.

And in all this beauty lived Adam, ruler of paradise, a Master
Given to silences ; dour lips that locked themselves on the Eden chorus
Tall, strong, holding in submission the creatures that sped
Before his hard brown gesturing finger ; given to absences from the garden confines.
Absences never explained to the other being, like yet unlike him,
His Eden-mate, tall as her consort, brown of skin and dark as moonless night
In hair and eyes. Eve, he called her, this lovely subservient creature
Free and happy ; Eve, silent as Adam, intent on her own small life,

Yet sometimes musing, half asleep, upon a feeling that bore
Upon her heart lightly, as if a single flying petal had touched
Her in passing. Days came when she almost achieved the same ecstatic
measure
Of joy that drew a pæan from birds, that called long rhythms of
perfume
From flowers ; that wakened the drowsy trees to lift their arms to
heaven.
But what Eve had was a moment's vista of perfect joy ; a muted tone
From her heart, lost among palm fronds. The moment was gone,
She wandered searching it, her eyes bewildered by an amethyst-tinted
Aura of loneliness. Then she forgot, dipped her black tresses in Eden
river,
Dried them in the sun at dawn so they borrowed the indefinite tints
Of that hour. For Eve knew nothing of heartache nor pain, no disillusion
Drew lines upon her face ; no disappointment clouded her sky,
Fear never tensed her body ; like the other creatures along Eden trails
Eve and time were strangers ; she lived in one fragrant now.
Adam was lord, the sun was golden, brown and yellow tigers
Were like some lilies ; snakes cool to the touch, likewise the river ;
Felines throbbingly warm—so was the hand of Adam :
Things were so. She accepted, indifferent. Yet—there in her heart
Lay a query—she wondered if creatures felt it too ? She asked them.
Asked the tiger that only yawned in reply ; tiny ones in meadows ;
Fish lazily still in their limpid home, worms in cool, dark tunnels.
They were happy, told her that in silence or murmurs. Nothing more.
The vague mist of her query gathered into a form, almost a definite
question,
A feeling of lack, something different in her, unfinished or not begun—

The light in Eden was always mild, serene, the face of the sun
Veiled itself in a haze like dust from insect wings or the ashes
Of spirit fire. For then earth moved in a misty ring, a pearly twilight
Curtains of eerie fog, the sun showing himself among them
As a mellow globe, and the moon and stars enchantingly dim.
There were times when the haze became overcast
By something separate, yet formless ; a rarefied fire, a beating whirl
Of light that stopped the feet of Eve, barred her way,
Yet not solid to altogether keep out the sun rays,
But it shielded God, for he was there ! He was not the glow,
Nor formless moving, nor whirl of fire ; but it held his thought.
She knew because quiet fell on beast, plant, river ; trees held
Their murmur. The colour of Eden paled before that translucence,
The air grew cool. When it had gone, a sudden fury of doing
Marked the place where his appearance lingered. Grass, flower,

Sapling sprouts crowded each other upon the place, tiny creatures swarmed,
The great four-footed nosed eagerly, the feline eyes gleamed
From thickets. Where the Creator for but an instant focussed
His attention, life was born.

There were times the Creator spoke to the custodians of his garden,
Not in words, but with intangible javelins of thought he pierced
Their understanding, left a wound wherein trembled his command.
To Eve, this God was only a suggested form, eluding her slow eyes
In that white whirl. Fearless yet, she felt the inner speech
Of him, insinuating between her and Eden's song, it soon escaped
Her. She went her way among the beasts, pushed aside
Sleek bodies pendant from trees.
There was Another. She could not know its nature ,
Save that it never sent a glorious haze to mark its advent,
Never left a trace like the tremendous doing that followed God,
When It drew near, Eve only was aware, when it had gone
An eerie loneliness also drew near, touching her heart
With cool hands. When she pushed idle fingers in damp earth,
It reached through roots to her and breathed on her from trees.
She never felt God close ; but *this* caressed her, almost spoke
In tones that lost themselves before they formed the words,
Eve never thought on God, he loomed remote ; but *this* '
Drew closer when she tired of happiness—or did it bring
The evanescent loneliness ? God had a place within invisible ovals
Of forbidden ground. This Other had all Eden.
Whether she dreamed, or it was so, it seemed
The warmth, the power to stir, subtle embracing of her,
Heightened and ended, almost took on form beneath
One certain tree. A tree unlike all others ; she never said of that
" It is a sister of such another "—a tree set in the garden centre,
It rose, a cone of twilight-hued foliage ; a cone whose tip
In a close swirl of leaves, pointed through a thinned place
In the earth-mist, straight toward a solitary star.
Roots half-exposed lay damply sweet to touch and smell.
Hid in thick leaves hung fruit Eve never saw on other trees ;
Odd, triple sided, its mottled skin of crimson, it hung
Among myrtle shadows ; and as it ripened in the pale sun
Its base grew broader and dark as mist on moonlight nights
Till the cone-shaped bodies slipped from the tree, stood erect
Upon its bases, stood untouched, slowly dried, wrinkled, disintegrated,
Often Eve leaned against the tree's smooth bulk and watched
The fruit, wondered if it was sweeter ? No taste appeased
Her wondering ; the fruit of that tree was forbidden.
God forbade, on pain of death. Why, she and Adam
Did not know. But through the Eden quiet, God flung

His edict. It crashed upon the two, left them breathless
Even a thought of that fruit mysterious, seemed encased
In a white-hot light; yet when the fallen fruit stood
Unmoving and through broken skin a syrup oozed, golden,
Mellowing to amber globes, Eve wondered if the Creator
Meant that never must she even lift one globule on a fingertip?
Slipped brown fingers through tree litter, close to the fruit,
Silence fell, a watchful listening—she did not dare!
And so remained unscathed by vengeance. Whatever action
Lay seedlike, ready for sprouting in disobedience, remained
Folded upon itself.

Once Eve saw a curious thing; the mist that swung with Earth
In spacious rhythm and hung in opal curtains, fringed
In drops that slaked earth's thirst, this sometimes thinned
And Heaven shone blue and clear. But *this* was a sudden thickening
That met another thickening from earth, vivid with a glow;
A something whirled into a sinuous form, a living arc,
It cut the air and hung before her, hung pendant from the tree;
She met eyes piercing keen, wings strangely thin, wings
With the indefinite hue of her own thoughts. She had never seen
This serpent's like. The life beat through his body, round and round
In cycles, strong as heart-pulse, his eyes had no filmy look
Of the snake; but were mirrors of her own.
Once, taking Adam by the hand, Eve led him toward the tree
Where opaque of eyes, the serpent hung supinely with no trace
Of vividness. Adam, impatient, turned away but her own step
Lagged; she looked back doubtfully—the serpent eyes
Had turned to sunset skies of colour; his look brought memories
Of felines whose fervent gaze she met through mist and parted reeds
Along the river-bank; somewhere in her fertile world
Lay barren places! Warning, invitation, loneliness drew her,
She tried to question Adam, bring before him this vagrant wandering
In herself. He refused; he, the masculine, no further
Engaged himself in a matter that eluded eye and ear.
But Eve, the feminine, secretly pondered over this serpent mystery,
He was yet upon the forbidden tree; she watched him
Coil and uncoil his length; untangle from clump of twigs,
Circle nests, till suddenly he ringed the trunk,
His form took on colour of green and silver, of the mottled skin
Of forbidden fruit; the small wings on his head trembled like leaves;
He might have been part of the tree; the light in his eyes
Stirred, shadowed, as Eden reflected the rings of mist
That belted the earth; they deepened, darkened, became mirrors
Of her own.

A night came, seeping through the mist from violet Heaven,
Adam disappeared among the tangled vines that bounded the garden,

The moon sent gleams of broken light through the world-haze ;
Beyond, beneath, within, Eve heard a chant of many tones
It rose from tree, from plant, from river deeps, from earth itself
Swung with the fog-rings, vagrant winds, carried the tones
From far away ; all in a unison, insect hum, nestling peep
And her own heartbeat. Eve stood, a living reed, swaying, uncertain
Her scented hair framing a face intent as flowers that may not bloom
Till sunrise. And the serpent met her eyes, the wings upon his head
Shimmered, fluttered faster and faster, looked like arcs
That swirling fish sent up from the river ; his body curved
In quicker rhythm, brilliant hues blended, cooled, disappeared,
He turned to one quivering flame, became a white sail
In the green garden horizon, blurred—he was gone !
Eve felt a presence, dark, close, closer, it touched her.
Eden became a mask that half-revealed a face whose eyes
Unfathomable, brooded miraculously through every separate tendril,
Leaf, fruit. Each was a part of some great form. The tones
Drew nearer, whispered in innumerable accents : " I am he you know
As a serpent with winged head. He is my symbol, and yours ;
The wings upon his head are symbols as this seed I breathe
Into your hand "—Eve felt within her hand a seed with tendril
Broken through, the wind had carried it ? or *This*
Breathed it toward her—but the wind was also *This* ;
" Listen to him," the tones abjured her, " to the serpent
Symbol of me, of Eden, of you ; he, the symbol of life you cannot see
But who is eldest child of the Creator "—the voice was smooth
As drip of early rain—" You are alone, Eve. Adam has gone
To other gardens, other mates he loved before he woke to find you.
Let me recount the tale of this God. He is bound by his own law
Of freedom and taboo. He creates only in the image of himself
Wherefore as he moves between his freedom and taboo,
All he creates are so. He is jealous. He dropped a line from his potent
 finger
To ring in this garden and you, his last creation.
You, Eve, are taboo to all creatures who flock round the secret line
That bars them from Eden, and holds you within.
God may create what he pleases, but once done, he may not undo.
He plants in every being the seed of future. It sprouts
And the results become interminable. God bound his creatures
With one infinite cord of vari-tint and differing strengths ;
Easily broken and lost forever in some ; in others strong as in Adam.
And because of his strength, Adam began to experiment,
Make his own laws, to defy, fill the earth with spawn unfitting,
Therefore God made Eden and you, Eve, to keep the heart of Adam
Upon this garden, the flawless, secure, the happy,
The dream of peace. So long as the earth endures, Eden will mean
The one place all-sufficing ; sun never burns, no wind is chill,

All creatures amenable to you. Even far-off catastrophes
Of worlds, in their final crash, mean nothing to you
But a glimpse of misty debris. Eden, wherein the Creator
Hopes to keep you from learning what freedom means.
Eden is your taboo. But *I* am here, the first-born, I was here
Before this garden; I am Life. You met my eyes and heard my voice
And I appear to you as a serpent with wings upon his head."

The voice grew deeper.
" And the symbol of God's taboo is the fruit of the tree.
What does he fear? He fears the seed that lies unopened yet,
In the depth of your soul. The fruit is a sign of knowledge
He would withhold, a knowledge of doing. He may not stay
The exultant sprouting of the seed. He warns, he threatens
If you eat of the fruit you will surely die—then, die!
Obey him and live as his most beautiful creature;
Sleep safely, wake to contentment, remain as the other ones
Here, all ignorant of thousand-petalled bloom of destiny.
Die, Eve, the lonely, but a step removed from your companions.
Die—and live for a new unfolding of the possible, the divine uncertainty
That marks the embryo-gods; cease to be like the tiger
Whose cubs you know will be striped; or birds whose nestlings
You know will be like their kind to the least feather.
Eat of the fruit of good and evil, choose your own taboo,
Your own prison. This Eden is but a prison whose walls
Are illusion of beautiful space all your own; so you may not wonder
About a space outside; never suspect all space is yours.
Wonderful flowers to keep you from pondering on the thought
Of seeds and so happening upon the seed with its hidden whorl
Of a vine that might fill this earth. Break this taboo,
Eat the forbidden fruit, die! And wake to know Good-and-Evil
The bound-together. Drink bitter herbs that in their dregs
You may discover one globule of pure joy; learn why the serpent
Carries upon his head the sunlit wings"—he was gone,
The light around him blazed as he flung his lengths in vivid spirals,
The light died in golden points. Deep in her heart Echo repeated
His words to Eve, the impact of his force yet shook her,
Vistas of what might be stretched before her. The thoughts
He flung struggled fitfully upon the threshold of her consciousness
The vague weariness that hovered at times around her
Condensed, grew stronger, refused to dissipate itself. She urged her steps
Close to the tree, her hands outstretched. Unheeding
The silence that always fell, she plucked the fruit and ate.

And as God had threatened, she died. For the Eve who roamed
So joyous through the scented ways of Eden—was no more.
A strange pride tensed her, brightened her eyes, for she had dared
To cut the invisible curve of God's taboo. She who had caressed
With easy hand, the sleek backs of animals and felt herself
One with them, was gone! For as she stood with core of the forbidden fruit
Yet in her damp brown fingers, a huge feline padded toward her,
Caught her gaze, stopped suddenly, and bared a sinister long tooth
Then, uncertain, half-trembling, dropped topaz eyes and slunk away.
Eve felt the gulf between herself and such. She thought
Upon her body, erect; with graceful hints of the animals;
Organs transmuted into suggestions—No, she had never been one with them!
Weaponless, except for a fearless heart. The beast she was no longer
Its sister. And as she stood Adam drew near, his face dour
Eyes dark with apprehension. Eve told him all. Her gestures
Were shifting pictures of beauty, like movements of young gazelles
Against a leafy screen. Her long black hair blew about his face
As she whirled in the cyclic dance of the serpent
Changing from form to form. The tones of her voice became
Like the running river as she chanted the revelation
Of the taboo, the mystery of a jealous God.
She murmured into her consort's ear what she had already learned,
That while she was kin to all beings in Eden, she was no longer
One of them; yet—her eager hands against her breast—she knew
There lived something within her made her mistress of them all,
And that something was the divine seed of the potential.

Eve held her long arms out from her body,
Her feet planted upon the dewy earth,
Her eyes raised to the whirling world-vapours,
The pale sun rays seeped through and made a delicate halo;
She became a living symbol of the eternal cross between
Soul and matter. Gravely she told Adam she had died,
The clouded eyes she turned to him were deep with surmise,
She plucked one of the forbidden three-sided fruit,
Held it before him, pushed it upon his palm. Her hands were firm
But Adam's trembled. "God will drive us from this garden," he muttered,
"I am your mate, your place was Eden.
I have other mates in other gardens." Eve gave the fruit
To his sinewy hand. "Eat! Then you will die, and be no longer bound
To any wife but me." So Adam ate. His eyes were opened.
No longer was this mate only a new, delightful change
From other mates. The Adam who loved strange creatures
Was dead. He saw Eve, the living cross, symbol of some vast happening,

As in a hazy distance of his own soul, he glimpsed
The great form of a destiny upon her way from the abode
Of Gods. He, and Eve, had broken their God's taboo,
Evoked a new and dazzling future and they must follow her !
Shadows began to creep ; the mist above their world turned rose and violet ;
Twilight drew near, when God would walk in Eden,
Loose his wrath upon their heads—Adam clasped his hand
On Eve's cool fingers, told his story to the Mother newborn in her gaze.

Told how he woke from one death-sleep and found her,
A woman, different from any creature he had known,
A flower, drawn from its stem and given power to speak and move.
Told of his consorts, sons and daughters, half-articulate and strange,
Who circled the forbidden Eden ; races he fathered long ago
A race of not-quite beast, hairy, tremendous, strong, with sodden lips,
Mis-shapen heads, yet in their sunken eyes the insignia of Adam ;
Heavy-bodied ones, of pendulous breast, their dim eyes peering,
Pathetically human in their gait ; a race all shaggy beast
Except near-Adam hands, whose sinewy fingers wove crude shelters
And vine-ropes to snare their food. A curious folk, erect,
Splay-footed and thick-palmed, whose females with milky eyes
And coarse red mane, were nonetheless graceful, alluring ;
A race of fleet near-men ; with silvery hair and round bland faces
Like full moons, their skin translucent moon tint. And a race
Of darkness lovers, breathing damp air through mossy curtains ;
Eyes that loved green ooze on wet stones ; and in whose vital streams
Mingled the red of Adam and the green ichor of the plants ;
And faintly-coloured eyes like forest cairns—all those sad,
Strange trials of creation ; races caught in fangs of hungry animals
Or withered to early death in moods of wind and cold,
Dropping like blooms in a nightmare garden.
Some that tried to follow in the wake of Adam, but slipped back
To their beast mothers, revealing only in some vagrant gesture,
What might have been—

Adam led Eve to Eden's confines, showed her all of these,
Told her, she was his youngest mate, henceforth his one wife,
His bold and futile trials with forms, were done. Eve's body
Was the end. The wings upon the serpent's head were symbols,
Of a race yet to come ; a wholly human, to survive and people earth
With living waves moving like tides forever forward and back,
Upward and down, slowly but surely to some starry rendezvous
Where all might enter, who by the glorious wings upon their heads,
Would show they knew the cryptic words ;
"I am a God."

The man and woman who thus chose their destiny
Trembled, clung together upon the verge of the vast pain-engirdled way
For them, Time must soon begin ; but now, all was there in one
Appalling vista of struggling humans.
Air blackened with dense smoke from martyrs' pyres ;
The din of frightened prayer ; sob, scream and mob-roar
Beat upon them. Sweat of slaves broke through huge dams
And drowned their masters. From all the horror the one man and woman
Turned back toward Eden. Too late ! Eden was gone,
Eden, the fragrant, the beautiful—forever gone,
To live but in race-memory ; a lovely dream buried in soul-caches ;
Companion to the vision of the glowing wings unfolding
On the serpent's head and the deeper vision of ultimate destiny.

FRANCES WIERMAN.

ANTIQUE MAGIC

WHO has found traces of the Old Gods in this land ?
Wandering among the thickets couched between the hills,
Following the streams' courses,
Who has found a lingering sorcery in all of these ?
Who has uncovered in a leaf the seal of an ancient footprint,
And the mould of young limbs in the curved hornbeam branches ?
Who has found the very sunlight heavy with an aged shadow,
And beheld the burn of a fiercer glimmer in the gloomy woods ?
Who, remarking a careless shepherd and his wench,
Has found their pastoral phantom shapes
Chiselled evermore into his mind ;
Has surprised in the shepherd boy the Faun,
And in the maid a sweet companion
For his night's rest ?

Is it too much a dream
To think that to the thickets and the sun-filled hollows
Still should the Old Gods intimately come ?
They are immortally graven in stone there,
Everlastingly bodied in trees there.
Should they peer from bushes with a smile as of light on glancing leaves ;
Who, remembering all these things,
Would cry to the print of a wonder too swiftly withdrawn :
" The Old Gods,
Though battered, faded, denuded, and too soon forgotten.
Still rear enduring limbs towards the light ! " ?

DAVID BRANSON.

AN AUTUMN WALK—AND AFTERWARDS

WE walked together when the trees were yellow as gold,
The firs were dark against the roofs.
They mapped their outlines on the yellow tiles.
Do you remember how the path ran by the lake ?
And everywhere the leaves were falling,
Falling and drifting, and twirling.
And the slender willows drooped their sprays—
We saw them in the water as we gazed,
Leaning on the balustrade.
Do you remember how we saw a fish
Jump from a lotus leaf and make an ever-widening circle ?
It disturbed the placid lake. The shadows quivered and were still.
And you called me by my name. Again you called.
A passer-by brushed past me, and another.
They were young boys with heavy boots
Who chased each other by the margin of the lake.
I heard an echo.
Some women passed, all dressed in silk and satin.
Their hair was glossy in the evening sun,
And on their feet, they wore embroidered slippers.
You asked me if I thought them rich
But I'd forgotten all that money buys.
I wondered if they could be rich.
The yellow leaves were falling all the time,
And yellow sunlight shone on yellow tiles.
One by one the leaves fell on us as we stood
Beneath a huge, prolific tree.
It had ten million million leaves
And they were falling, one by one.
We spread our arms around a gnarlèd trunk,
And asked the old wood,
" Could it feel the touch of human hands ? "
We thought the deva must have fall'n asleep,
He hid so quietly in his tree.
The sky was blue than the deepest sea, at sunset,
Sunrise, in the rags of sun or moon—
A bright blue sky.
I gazed and gazed.
A bright blue sky.
The minutes passed, a lifetime without sound.
You were not there, and I, alone—
I wondered if the sky were vast as loneliness and,
The human heart
And then you came. You laughed because I'd stood so still.
We talked of mutual friends, of places where we'd been.
Of countries we would visit when the wherewithal
Should fall from some benevolent heaven.

And, holding out our hands, we caught the golden leaves,
And golden were our futures, and golden were our hearts.

A fortnight later you and I, together,
Went again to where the trees had scattered gold.
The gold lay withered by the walls.
Someone had swept it into dusty heaps.
Above, we saw the branches, thin and bare,
The gold we trampled on the ground.

Kobé.

PAO SHAN.

THE CHERRY TREE

WHEN I was young
I climbed a tree,
Where cherries bobbed
Deliriously.

But now betwitched
By age below,
I gaze at cherry
Clouds of snow ;

And gravely wish
That I might be
A child to climb
A cherry-tree,

Instead of sad
Because I know
Blossom must soon
Drift down below.

A. DORIS L. WILSON.

NOW

BIRD,
Weaving your daisy-chain of song,
Tell me your word.

I am! I am! I am!
My life's this moment long,
But without end.

I know no morrow and no yesterday.
Of death I never heard,
Of right nor wrong,
Of why nor how.
I live!
Enough for me to know
I live!
Now!

S. W. POWELL.

NIGHT

LIGHTS out!
No bugle call
Darkens the windows.
The lights are done
As voices fall
To silence, one by one—
Contention ended
And story spun—
When dusk and drowsiness
Shutter the eye
And still the tongue.

D. H. SILVER.

DYNAMICS OF AMERICAN POETRY: XLIII

First Furrow (Henry Harrison) was published simultaneously with the author, Boris Todrin, entering the poetry course at Columbia University which was given to him as a Poetry Week Scholarship by Anita Browne, founder organizer of Poetry Week, inaugurating a new idea at the University which has been commended by the head of the University Extension. Miss Browne is to carry the idea throughout the states, and abroad, having these scholarships given in poetry in the various Universities and colleges of the nation. Many college presidents are now members of her Poetry Week Council and keenly interested in the plan. If the young people of the nation are encouraged in their poetry in proportion as they are in the other arts then poetry will come into its own as not only one of the highest expressions of creative art but one of the most remunerative.

They say of Boris Todrin, who is seventeen years old, that he reveals a high recognizable ability. In June, 1931, a little pamphlet and premonitory came to me from this young writer. It tells us of the attraction and mystery of the East for Todrin and there are several small writings that are touched with charming feeling. From *First Furrow*, which numbers 95 pages, " The Green Cathedral " tells us more of this young writer:

> The sacred shrine should be where psalm and psalter
> Rise from the pure cathedral reared in pine;
> Wrapped in the wood of ages lies the altar,
> The sacred shrine.
>
> Confer the saint-ship on the saintly shine
> Of sun that leads the feet of those who falter
> To find green as the forest chapel's sign.
>
> Permit no pallid doubt to darkly palter
> The reverence that we must not resign;
> For storm or snowlike faith can never alter
> The sacred shrine.

A Flagon of Beauty, by Wilson MacDonald; publishers, Gay Hagen, Inc., Buffalo, N.Y.

Wilson MacDonald came to lunch with me not long ago, Anita Browne bringing him and Joseph Auslander making a fourth. He is a man of very quiet mien and refused a number of the dishes provided since they were not vegetarian. He is rolling up an enviable reputation. He is called Canada's Poet Laureate. The *New York Times Book Review* states: " In the present generation of poets whose name is legion, Wilson MacDonald is the outstanding figure." And William Lyon Phelps, of Yale University, proclaims him: " Wilson MacDonald is an original poet of distinction. His lectures and recitals are intensely interesting and appealing." This new book, *A Flagon of Beauty*, is a companion volume to *Out of the Wilderness*.

We learn of him, now in his early forties, that he knows North America from Labrador to Vancouver Island and from Narragansett Bay to San Diego. Other books of MacDonald are: *Songs of the Prairie Land*, *Ode on the Diamond Jubilee of Confederation*, *Out of the Wilderness*, *Caw-Caw Ballads*. Wilson MacDonald ran 100 yards in less than 10 seconds, but he has done much more than this. Our beloved Rev. Robert Norwood, recently deceased, called him one of the greatest poets of the Anglo-Saxon race.

Flagons of Beauty is a substantial book of 227 pages. Let us pause a moment to consider the right length for a book of poems. There are those who say, "Don't put too many in that book," "Don't surfeit the reader with your generosity." What do the readers of the REVIEW think?

"Enigma" strikes one:

Starving for fragrance on the lilied hills,
  Hungry for colour in a bower of rose,
Grieving for beauty amid daffodils,
  Man—the enigma—goes.

He covers his head from suns and grieves at cold;
  He walks by silver rivers and has thirst.
When youth is for his asking he grows old:
  Man—by himself accurst.

Lord of the overwhelming loveliness,
  Of the flung sunlight and the zoning shade!
Forgive us in these prisons of distress
  Whose bars ourselves have made.

His talent sings through "Poplars," "The Vesper Hour," a "Night Song," "Grey Winds," "Drought." The last stanza of "Hill Song":

There is a Fiddler on the hills
  Who draws a mighty bow,
And flutings of a thousand rills
  Applaud him far below.
And only he whose heart is pure
  Shall hear this Fiddler play;
And only he whose feet are sure
  Upon the granite way,
Can gain this music of the wind
  Across the mountains hurled
When a violin is crying
  At the shoulder of the world.

The first stanza of "O Viewless World" is typical of this chilly morning. I am giving it:

The snow is turning swift to sleet
And westward wildly blows.
The air is like a one-way street
Where tireless traffic goes.

With *The Hill Road*, by Margaret E. Bruner, comes the picture of a charming, laughing face, an Indiana face, and her poetry has found its way into many publications.

Margaret Bruner speaks of her search for beauty, gazing on cliff and stream.

And yet, it seems a far-off thing,
A vague, intangible dream.

She is one of the many writers who speak of only knowing ways of inland born and feeling the sea's urge ever and ever, man's great friend the sea. To the ceaseless striving for utterance, Miss Bruner turns in her sonnet "It will not matter":

It will not matter in the years to come
Whether or not our dreams are all fulfilled;
When this fierce tumult in the heart is stilled
And we are stripped of song—our senses dumb
With lethargy that leaves us cold and numb,
Yet see and know but never once are thrilled;
And age comes creeping and the heart is chilled
Hearing afar youth's faintly beating drum.

And none will know or heed the struggling soul
Who, starving, fed on husks instead of bread;
They will not know he paid a heavy toll—
That hours of travail have no golden scroll
To thoughts that clamoured but could not be said—
So many hungry hearts must go unfed!

Red Hibiscus, by Leighton Brewer, is a poem of length, the voice of one of the many young, who suffered the War. We start with him on his journey to the enchanting Isle of Bermuda:

The chilling death-white mist and sullen green
Of north Atlantic seas had given way
To sun and sky and troops of bright young clouds,
. . . The ship's prow,
Steady as a granite promontory,
Cut evenly into the sapphire floor
And curled it back in peacock-coloured waves.

Do you know these waters? They are like this. He tells us of his companions on the voyage. It is entertaining. In so much loveliness the heart longs to share it and we find the young hero not alone. Descriptive lines follow:

Fringing the harbour rose in bas-relief,
And floated motionless upon the lake
Of liquid mercury. The evening calm
Soft-pillowed on the breast of dying day,
Lay like a silvery mist enveloping
Unruffled waters, when the sunset-gun,
A single stunning hammer-stroke upon
A giant anvil, rupturing the silence,
Spoke out like Destiny ; and far away
A military bugle called reclaimed
The soldier from his duty.

Describing the thought in the mind of this boy, or young man, he didn't like the thought of war :

. . . He didn't like
The thought of war—a disagreeable thought—
That caused a sinking feeling in his stomach
And anchored down his heels.

Brewer knows what he is talking about. The strenuous and tragic conditions he met in his training as a chase-pilot and after his actual service at the front—he knows. He suffered from it a serious check in his physical activities in the life that followed and has been busily occupied in teaching and studying, having taught English both at Groton School and Harvard University during the past five or six years. He has given up his position in the English Department of Harvard and devoted himself entirely to his writing and *Red Hibiscus*, his first book, is really an introduction to a longer poem, which he is writing.

Eva S. Browning's background is New England and the Church, her elder brother being a suffragan bishop of the Episcopal Church for the eastern half of Massachusetts. She came to New York as the wife of a young photo engraver in the days when photo engraving was a new and untried vocation. Always the young couple promised one another that when they had made a certain amount of money they would leave business and devote themselves to the life poetic, see the far corners of the world and enjoy its beauty. But photo engraving rose in importance and Mr. Browning rose with it. Children came and the time for retirement became more and more remote, and at last faded away. Her children grown and occupied with families of their own, Mrs. Browning now manages an apartment house, a tea room and many real estate holdings in the foothills of the Berkshires and writes about the life poetic, the far corners of the world and the New England of her birth.

Mrs. Browning's engagingly presented book of 100 pages (*Cyclone and Other Poems*, Parnassus Press, 12 East 15th Street, New York) has a ring about it of verity as well as sensation. In " The Spring " which follows, there is the real promise :

Spring hides,
For I can hear
Her sly laughter
In the ripple of water
Under the ice.

Spring smiles,
For I can see
Reflections of her lips
In the glowing bark
Of forest trees.

Spring crouches,
For I can watch
Her hold her breath
In the brown buds
Of drooping willows.

And from all the charm of this promise of Spring, we will turn to " Drouth " :

I hear you,
   bud, bloom and seed,
   crying for drink,
pushing your tender feet
through the hot ashlike mould
seeking a waterhold.
Your pale bones lie stark and staring
as ever silvered bones of man and beast
lay stark and staring
in greater and more lonely deserts,
facing a brazen God.

A more personal note is struck in Mrs. Browning's " Balances " :

Am I extravagant
If I but seek a quiet spot
Wherein to dwell with Love
Free from mocking—
   I think not.

Am I extravagant
If such riches of simplicity
Are full spent day by day
In royal feasting—
   I think not.

Am I extravagant
If thus success in Love is won,
Can song pay even one per cent.
On such felicity—
   I think not.

I once asked a very distinguished physician in New York what were the best years of a woman's life. He returned a very measuring glance and replied : " If she's worth anything at all, after she is through with the ' old adjutations of myrtal and roses,' when she has finished with the first duties of being a woman and she steps into middle life then come her best years, twenty at least, from fifty to seventy. Then is when the value of a good mind and life's experience together with the sex feminine can be of great value in this world." It is interesting that Mrs. Browning was not caught in the mazes of print until sixty.

Mary Dixon Thayer brings to a *Sonnet Sequence* (The Macmillan Co., New York) a most essential quality—Sincerity. However great illumination, or the exuberant flow of words lacking sincerity, how quickly the mind of the reader forgets it all. Mrs. Fremont-Smith tells me in a recent letter that " every single poem the book contains was written with a kind of passionate fervour," and informally continues: " That sounds rather romantic and ridiculous, but it is true! I wrote the Sonnet not with an academic idea of expressing 'the beautiful' (or anything else!) in sonnet form, but because I was passing through a rather difficult and illuminating experience, and these sonnets were written because I could not help writing them, and however much they may fail in other respects, I know that they are utterly sincere." The publishers emphasize in a few lines this quality of sincerity, speaking of the volume as being " utterly without pose, that is, not bound by any fashions of the moment and absolutely sincere."

Mary Dixon Thayer has eight other books recorded in this: *The Child on his Knees*, *A Child's Way of the Cross*, *Ends of Things*, *New York and other Poems*, *Songs of Youth*, *Foam*, *The Intellectuals*, *Songs before the Blessed Sacrament*, and her poetry was recognized in 1924 when she received the first prize from *Contemporary Verse* for her poem " New York."

Who lives that does not enjoy the extolling of their City? " New York " is a poem of twenty-seven stanzas, capturing the thrill of my home town. It opens with:

Come to me, children of men!
You will be stunned with wonder.
I am the City Gigantic!
I am the City of Thunder!

Ending with:

Court me or spurn me—I care not!
Stab me—caress me—I live!
I am the best and worst of you.
What you have given, I give.

The owner of this book is glad to find a picture on the last leaf of the jacket—oh yes, one likes to see a picture, and there is a story of her faring. She is thrice holder of the Lawn Tennis trophy of Pennsylvania and Eastern United States, and the Philadelphia and District Championships, while but a few years ago she was among the coveted " First Ten of the National Tennis Ranking." Since then this writer has gone into marriage and has two sons and still turns to the rich source of writing. Good.

There are thirty-nine sonnets here. I like an odd number. Let us read the first:

Because my eyes are blind with tears, O Spring,
And childhood is a flower at my feet,
Because I have forgotten how to sing
And there is one whom I shall never meet—
I pass your shrine, O Spring, and do not bow,
And though I feel your ever ardent kiss
My heart is very cool and quiet now
Because of this, O Spring, because of this!
Yet as of old, the shining meadows run
In bluebell-crested waves across the hills,
Yet, as of old, the vintage of the sun
Is caught in the deep cups of daffodils,
And baby ferns unfolding by the lake
Stretch tiny fists and tremble, half awake.

Most beautiful of all is the twenty-second:

Lean back, O day, upon the breast of night
And close your dreaming eyes and sleep—ah, sleep!
Now is the hour of silence, now delight
And sadness touch and bow their heads, and weep.
Then fold your pale, sweet hands, O day, and close
Your eyes and rest, nor fear lest anything
Disturb the quiet depths of your repose
For from this sleep there is no wakening!
But in the dawn with you upon the hills
I walked, O day, and your fair hair, unbound,
Was sunlight in the wind, and daffodils
Started beneath your footprint on the ground!
Yet I remember once you paused and said
" Will you forget me, youth, when I am dead?"

The increasing desire all over the United States for the reading of poetry is well directed by such editors as our fellow Poetry-Reviewer Robin Lampson, of Berkeley, California. In *The Courier*, where Mr. Lampson entitles his column " The Poetic Viewpoint," his selection is excellent. Poetry holds a thousand keys to as many doors, and how many are the congenial minds one meets in the service of this presiding muse. I feel THE REVIEW has found one in Mr. Lampson.

ALICE HUNT BARTLETT.

The Apollo Players' production of *Advertising April* was again distinguished by the vivacious and self-contained playing and admirable poise and speech of Miss Anne Lipman, although the part did not exactly suit her, and really first honours should go to another Gold Medallist of The Poetry Society, Miss Eileen Allbrook, whose *Princess* was a remarkable character study.

SPRING WANTONING

THERE is a strange wantoning abroad today,
As though the world o'er brimmed
With love and laughter.
Beneath the silver birches in the copse,
A blackbird's song is running,
Like a stream of crystal water.
Only the owl sits motionless
Beneath a fir-tree's cover.
Like a dropped note of ecstasy ;
Waiting for dusk to bring her lover.

The rabbits are afield,
Like a routed army
Retreating in disorder,
With white ensigns flying.
And the meek brown hare
Has lost his senses ;
Though March is long since dead,
And April dying.
Fox cubs are gambolling
On the springy turf
Beside their lair ;
And from the meadow marshes
Comes a peewit's plaintive crying.

The larks have wrenched apart
The gates of heaven,
And jewelled bars of song
Are tumbling all around.
Tree-creepers twinkle up the beech's bole,
And drop, like lead plummets, to the ground.
Only the nightingale, forsaken and forlorn,
Wrings from her wound
Small bruised pearls of sound,
As she mourns for exiled beauty,
On a leafless bough of thorn.

There is a sweet wantoning abroad to-day.
As though the world o'er-brimmed
With love and laughter.
The pixies' pool is primrose rimmed,
And the wind-blown petals sail away,
Like faery galleons
On a haze of golden water.
The bright air sparkles like a cup of cowslip wine,
Till the very trains glide from the tunnel's soft mossed gloom,
Like slicking shuttles, leaving in their wake, a line
Of taut, steel-grey threads running through the loom,
And the long black, polished roads
Wind citywards,
Like rivers to the sea.
Where the tide of traffic ebbs and flows
Unceasingly.

Only the two chestnut horses
Harnessed to a brewer's dray,
Unloading barrels at The Golden Crested Wren,
Nuzzle deeper in their corn,
As they ruminate on buttercup-starred meadows,
And the strange sphinx-like ways of men.

EDITH. M. WALKER

The Master of the Temple (the Rev. Dr. Carpenter) will address the Kensington Centre of the Poetry Society on Hebrew Poetry on July 8.

ON DEFINING POETRY

A story of particular facts is as a mirror which obscures and distorts that which should be beautiful: poetry is a mirror which makes beautiful that which is distorted."—SHELLEY.

"*If I were obliged to name the class of things to which poetry belongs I should call it a secretion."*—A. E. HOUSMAN.

A. E. HOUSMAN'S lecture delivered at Cambridge last month, *The Name and Nature of Poetry*, (Cambridge University Press, 2s.) has provoked a great many people to write to the papers with alternative definitions of poetry. "Poetry," writes someone, "is the supreme expression of the greatest gifts God has given to humanity." "Poetry," suggests another, is "a perfect thought expressed in perfect form," and the old inexhaustible fascinating discussion is renewed. Poetry, of course, eludes the laws of definition. The strictly logical method "per genus et per differentiam," cannot secure and bind down the meaning of so elusive a thing. It is easy to define a type of poetry in this manner—blank verse, for instance, is poetry written in unrhymed iambic pentameters—but the meaning of poetry itself cannot be netted in this way, for poetry belongs to a genus of its own, and can therefore be referred to nothing higher. The logical definition being impossible, the imaginative takes its place. "Poetry is a continuous substance or energy; poetry is a glimpse of the divine"; fascinating and inexhaustible discussion—fascinating because everyone who loves poetry has discovered it for themselves and so in a sense each one's experience is unique; inexhaustible because a conclusion satisfactory to everyone can fortunately never be reached.

Elizabeth Drew in her recently published *Discovering Poetry* (O.U.P., 8s. 6d.), a most stimulating and interesting book, implies in her own description the reason why all the ways of defining poetry are interesting and no way completely satisfying. "Poetry," she suggests, "is a particular stimulus which provides a certain kind of response in the right sort of reader." One of the many newspaper correspondents follows on the same line in "a poem is a spiritual vehicle which conveys beauty from one mind to another. It is constructed of words and the wheels do not touch the ground." This is a new and more profitable line of approach. Poetry is something then that depends on two people, that is at once strongly individual and that yet relies for its meaning on a response from another. It seems that the nature of that response from the reader may be as complex and as varied as possible, depending on age and circumstances and on all the past and present associations and emotions in the reader's mind, and even, as Housman suggests (but with regard to the writing of, not the reading of, poetry), on the time of day and the state of one's digestion. It almost seems that poetry were something existing principally in the mind of the reader, with no actual reality of its own. But anyone who loves poetry will feel most strongly that this is not so, although of course enormous allowance must be made for taste, both individually and according to period. The fifteenth century belittled Chaucer. Dryden and his contemporaries were inclined to praise Ben Jonson at the expense of Shakespeare. Abraham Cowley, now hardly read, enjoyed a period of enormous popularity. The eighteenth century deplored the taste of the seventeenth, and the twentieth century find themselves in their turn more in sympathy with the Jacobeans than with their grandfathers. How is it then that certain poetry continues to draw the same sort of response from readers who differ in race and age and thought and intellect, in all the ways in which it is possible for one individual to differ from another ?

There are many people who think of poetry as an " escape from reality," and they should be the first to cry out that herein lies the answer to this question of an almost universal response to great poetry. The point is that the " right reader," as Miss Drew would say, approaches poetry in a spirit of acceptance, and the right sort of poetry has the power of creating in the reader an instant sympathy with the mood of the poet. This does not in the least mean that the " right kind " of reader is a flabby sort of creature without any strong personality or convictions of his own. The responsibility lies on the poet—can he sweep us off our feet, is his magic strong enough to cause us to sink for the moment all our own personal prejudices and preoccupations ? Good poetry has this potency, and indifferent poetry, faintly pleasing though it may be, has not. Different people, for instance, hold very strong and very various opinions on the subject of war : but the St. Crispin speech in *Henry V* draws a similar response from all poetry lovers, a tingle and glow of sympathy, a quickening of the pulse. From the point of view of cold reason Keats' philosophy of life may strike us as a shallow and selfish ideal, yet the lines :

Beauty is truth, truth beauty ; that is all
Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know,

evoke in their context, not critical censure but sympathy. We may hold strong views on the subject of drink ; but that is not to say that we cannot fall, at least temporarily, under the spell :

Ah, my Beloved, fill the Cup that clears
To-day of past Regrets and future Fears ;
To-morrow ?—Why To-morrow I may be
Myself with Yesterday's Seven Thousand Years.

Shakespeare, of course, might almost be said to kidnap his readers, so utterly does he transport them from their earthy selves. The most confirmed cynic is shaken by the tremulous ecstasy of Juliet's cry to the tarrying Romeo—" Gallop apace, you fiery-footed steeds." The firmest believer in the immortality of the soul shudders at Claudio's cry of terror in the face of death, " Aye, but to die, and go we know not where." The prudish laugh at Falstaff, the flippant shiver at John of Gaunt's dying prophecies. Good poetry demands and good poetry receives from the reader an immediate acceptance, and this leads on to another point, a distinction which is not precise and yet does not exist between poetry which has a personal and individual appeal—and poetry which has a national, or even universal, significance.

It is the glory of poetry that its magic lies by no means in the material of which it makes use, for the poet works simply on the common stuff of everyday life. Poetry, to paraphase Brooke, is " woven of human joys and cares." The magic lies in the handling of this so familiar material, and Keats meant something of the kind when he said that poetry should strike us not as something strange but as the expression of our highest thoughts. A man can only feel an emotion as an individual; but a great poet can invest the expression of this emotion, whatever it may be, with a feeling of the eternal, of the universal, so that the personal becomes somehow merged in the impersonal, and the poetry is " not for an age but for all time."

A great deal of good poetry has been written in every age whose appeal is personal, and the work of the lesser poets who write in one particular style and are perhaps masters of that style, survives because there are always readers in every age who have a fondness for that type of poetry. To take a few names at random—there will be people to read Marlowe or George Herbert or Pope or Lewis Carroll or W. B. Yeats as long as there are people alive who care for magnificent rhetoric or good religious verse or satire or humorous verse or Celtic mysticism. But there will be people to read Shakespeare as long as there are people alive at all. Personal and impersonal are not very easy words to juggle with, but anyone who thinks for a moment will agree that Shakespeare, the greatest of all poets, is also in a sense the most impersonal. The difference between the great and the good becomes very forcibly marked when we compare Shakespeare with such an excellent second-class poet as, for instance, Dryden. We read Dryden, and all the time we are conscious that he belongs to a particular age, the Restoration period, and we admire the faithfulness and vivacity with which he portrays his own background, and herein lies much of the interest and enjoyment of Dryden's poetry—in the very fact that we never lose sight of the realization that Dryden was a poet of an age different from our own; but we read Shakespeare and are only intermittently conscious of this discrepancy of more than three centuries between ourselves and him. The circumstances of everyday life have changed in almost every particular, the essentials not at all. Someone has described poetry as the announcement of a spiritual discovery, and in spirit we may be close to an age which superficially differs enormously from our own. And since poetry does deal with spiritual discoveries, it is very curious that A. E. Housman should try to draw a distinction between pure poetry and poetry—pure poetry apparently meaning poetry with the minimum of meaning. " Meaning," he says, " is of the intellect, poetry is not." Not only of the intellect certainly, but as certainly not divorced from the intellect.

" Poetry is not a thing said but a way of saying it." This is a sort of misleading half-truth. Surely the point is that the poet's way of expressing himself enhances the meaning, so that the actual words seem to have a wider significance because of the emotional response quickened by the poetry in the readers' mind. To say that the meaning does not matter is almost rubbish. Mr. Housman does not succeed in proving this very doubtful point, for he quotes in support of his theory Shakespeare's song, " Take, O take those lips away," with the comment " That is nonsense; but it is ravishing poetry." But of course Shakespeare knew and we know and surely Mr. Housman must know that it is nothing like nonsense, unless nonsense means that the emotional significance of the poem is greater than the actual sense of the words if they were reduced to prose and parsed; but then all poetry would be nonsense. Thus Mr. Housman lures us on to the most extraordinary of conclusions—that poetry is more physical than intellectual, and may be recognized by the physical symptoms it provokes, such as " a constriction in the throat, and a precipitation of water to the eyes." An emotional response of the mind may well evoke such physical symptoms, but to argue from this that poetry is more physical than intellectual is as obviously untrue as a faulty syllogism in logic. Perhaps, however, this is only meant as a rather extreme way of saying that the emotional pleasure poetry affords the reader is greater than the intellectual pleasure of analysing the way in which the poet gets his effects. At any rate Mr. Housman implies discredit on one of the tiresome snobberies of modern criticism, a tendency to suggest that the universal appeal of great poetry is to its discredit rather than to its credit. Never was an implication more false-founded. To-day is the age of the individual, but the cult of the individual is in danger of being sorely overdone; and this brings us back to Miss Drew, with her very interesting chapter on communication *versus* expression, and her penetrating commentary on the work of T. S. Eliot, and her suggestion that the poetry of the moderns is over-personal over-individualistic. It is significant of the trend of the times that Mr. Sacheverall Sitwell has just published a book of poems complete with notes on the text to explain allusions otherwise inexplicable to the average reader. As Miss Drew justly says " the poet inevitably asks too much of the common reader," and the result of this is that poetry is no longer a common heritage for all, but is becoming " a very exclusive cult for very exclusive people." A rather sorry and uncomfortable conclusion to a search for a definition of poetry; but then of course it is not a conclusion.

U. M. D. ORANGE.

* * *

Mr. Huw Menai's new volume, *Back in the Return*, (Heinemann 6s.) rewards expectancy, for his verse is of a definitely fine quality. It would seem as if the author's emancipation has claimed him greatly, many of his lyric poems resembling those of Mr. W. H. Davies in their charm and delight :

Sweet Robin ! in a storm of snow
I've seen him on his haunches sit—
A lighthouse giving lovely glow
For bird-like flakes to beat on it,
Lighting the way to faith. O Lord,
I thank thee for this little bird.

There is not nearly so much about pit life in the book as the title suggests ; the title poem itself, which fills a third of the book, evades its own theme after a while. Yet the pitman's cause, where dealt with, is treated with fine poignancy and restraint :

Where shall the eyes a darkness find
That is a menace to the mind
Save in the coal mine, where one's lamp
Is smothered oft by afterdamp ?
Down there is found the deepest gloom,
Where Night is rotting in her tomb :
It is a being, something fraught
With evil, clutching at man's throat.
And Oh ! the stilllness underground !
Oppressive silence, never a sound,
Save for a dribble here, and there,
A gas-pop, or a gust of air,
When idle are the wheels, and one
Sits down to listen, all alone :
When one will welcome, with surprise
The unmelodious squeaks of mice ;
From Baltic beetles gladly take
And Jaspers, what small sounds they make. . . .

The mine is no romantic place—
It stinks of Hell from sump to " face " ;
A honeycomb of headings, stalls,
Airways, drifts, and rubbish walls.
Intake fresh, and foul Return,
Which lighted once becomes an urn
For human ashes !

Nature meant
Men's short existence to be spent,
Their waking and their working hours,
Among God's fields of green and flowers,
And not to be wretched moles resigned
To burrow on till they are blind.
Or snails upon a broken track,

With hills the burdens on their back :
Nay ! Nature meant all men to toil
To buy their leisure, not to boil
Their sweat away until they're dry,
With nothing more to do but die.

All the same, I hope that Mr. Menai will one day present a complete picture of pit life—not only its bitter portions, but with its moments of relief as well—with the courage of its women working successfully against terrible odds of dirt and environment ; their devoted ministration to their men folk at all hours of the day and night ; the bright door-knockers and whitened flag-stones ; the remarkable prettiness of the Welsh children ; the miner's efficiency in running his own clubs, musical or otherwise ; his skill at ambulance work ; and many other aspects. The shadows surrounding him are heavy enough, God knows, but the portrayal of his few alleviations would serve to sharpen their outline and make a convincing picture with a wide appeal.

From Basil Blackwell's there are two volumes of verse : *At the Edge of Dream* by Ida E. L. Hinde (3s. 6d.) and *Far Country* by Carla Lanyon Lanyon (4s. 6d.). Both writers have a firmness of touch that is yet delightfully feminine, and they write on a variety of themes. Miss Hinde is the more often concerned with religious ones, but her subjects also include Egypt and London, apples and orchards, indoor and outdoor scenes, and she uses several classical metres in a most effective manner. " Joy " is a good example of her work ;

Between His hands God holds
  A little flame for me.
I see the steadfast Fingers closed
  About it quietly,
And the rosy glow that creeps between
  Shines through as solemnly
As though it were a Presence lamp
  Telling of mystery.
My soul kneels in the gloom
  And watches eagerly ;
Though I can only see the Hands
  It is enough for me :
I know within, a heart of flame
  Is throbbing steadily,
My waxen taper white
  Is cold, it has no light.
But soon across the dark
  Will leap a tiny spark,
And in that sacrament of fire
  I shall have touched the soul's desire,
And flame in ecstasy !

Miss Hinde is an old Poetry Society member, and this fact adds a further pleasure to the recognition of good verse.

Miss Lanyon Lanyon's poetry has a serenity and clarity about it that gives an impression of translucence—her thought is beautifully hidden to be beautifully shown. Even in a poem of storm the limpid quality dominates in the end, as in " Sponsors " :

Surely a wind blew from the coast that night,
Over the long hills to a long grey house ;
Wild seas had sent their vassal to arouse
The sleepers, and to set the rooms alight.

How should a mother notice, in her pain,
That trees have bent their barren boughs outside,
That one unnoticed door blows open wide,
And all the blinds are wet with salty rain ?

Then there was joy about that house at morn
So many years ago ; and no one knew
That the slow patient seas had claim on you,
And coast winds wept the night when you were born.

Though he often makes concessions to the commonplace term and the easier way of overcoming the difficulties of prosody, Mr. D. J. Darlow is often impressive, particularly in the poems of his own landscape. *Shadows on the Amatole* (Longmans, Green and Co., 3s. 6d.) is no irrelevant title to the book, for the reader is always conscious of those mountains in the background. These lines are from " In an Ancient Forest " :

The fragrance here is earthly, as not yet
The smell of the creation had been cleansed
By rain-washed air but clung about it still.
The birds sing high upon the utmost tops
And venture not below but where a stream
With spouting waterfall has cleft the forest,
Letting in the light and shouting, careless
Of the ancient gloom. Serpents are here
And old-eyed spiders that can never die
But sit malicious in their furry webs.
Quietly must I tread lest I disturb
This old, old world that look at me askance.
And soon I must escape their moon-like eyes
Their half-awareness, lest they fascinate
And hold me there until the end of time
And rob me of the miracle of death.

In so small a collection as that of Mary Micholls' *Sonnets and other*

Poems (Elkin Matthews 2s. 6d.) one expected to find at least " multum in parvo," but the language of the poems is too facile to deal with even its few subjects satisfyingly.

The author of *The Highway of Life* (Houghton Pub. Co. 2s. 6d.), Edward Wormald, deserves praise for sustaining his theme of man's development through nearly 150 stanzas. Here and there he gives us a neat epigram such as :

Unwearying vigilance, purposeful strife
Alone can assure the retention of life,

but for the most part his triple measure tires us with its monotony.

Beatrice Eve's *Jonquils* (Blackwell, 2s. 6d.) is a very small volume of verse, but it has that quality of exquisiteness that gives a particular pleasure. The poems are intimate and tender, and they afford a new charm each time they are read. " Love in Suburbia " shows all this and more. (The author is well known to readers of The Poetry Review and *Poetry of To-day.*)

The wind is sighing in the chestnut trees,
Threshing so softly that it breaks my heart ;
Why is the summer night so beautiful,
Knowing we two must part ?

The lamps in the High Street hang like a heavy chain,
And lovers walk in the leafy pools of light ;
A few small children swing on the painted rails,
Playing till darkness falls and it is night.

Slowly, dreamily, we wend our way ;
The lamps and the trees and the children are left behind ;
We come to a cottage set by a cherry tree,
Where a spray of jasmine shadows the ruddy blind.

How dark the porch, and the ivy glitters strangely,
The air is fragrant with apples that ripen fast.
In the close sweet darkness his arms are crushed about me ;
His mouth comes down to my own and holds me fast.

The wind is sighing in the chestnut trees,
Threshing so softly that it breaks my heart ;
Why is the summer night so beautiful,
Knowing we two must part ?

From the Boar's Head Press are two volumes of limited copies with particular type and paper. Of Mr. A. R. Ubsdell's poems, *East and West*, those of the East are in the finer voice, though it is often hatred that galls the ink. Local words give a strange colouring to his pictures. Part of " On the Verandah " follows :

Stifling is the air
As the short twilight settles down
To the long, dread, Indian night. . . .
A jackal wails . . . a pi-dog howls . . . and there
Along the road that leads into the town,
A road buried in choking dust, and white,
And scarred with wheel-tracks of a thousand carts,
The jangling bullock-tonga struggles slow,
Wheels all askew, its clumsy upper parts
All swaying and trembling, and hung below,
The glimmer of a light. The minas shriek,
And quarrel in the close-leafed peepul trees,
And pattering along, a crowd of meek,
Dust-caked, sun-hardened cultivators seek
Their mud-walled hovels. On the foetid breeze
Is borne the pungent smell of boiling ghee
Mixed up with biri smoke and turmeric,
While from the basti by the banyan tree
Bursts on the night a hurricane of quick
Fierce throbs . . . the tom-tom's aching beat. . . .

Mr. Digby-Haworth Booth also writes of the Orient and Occident, but he goes no farther East than the slopes of Helicon in its god-trodden days. Kleinias, the potter, in the title-poem of that name, has his skill distorted by a vision of the Bacchantes :

And when once more my hands laid hold
  Of patient clay to ply my trade,
Some spirit dwelt within the mould
  And warped the features of each maid.

No gentle mouth shut with sweet grace
  But lips flung wide to fan desire :
The dove's eyes gone, and in their place
  The windows of a soul on fire. . . .

So now I sit with idle hands
  That will not mould a thing of shame,
And people take their chaste commands
  Where Glaucus tends his busy flame. . . .

In so short a collection of verse there is great variety, extending from the humour of " The Monkeys' Calendar " to the quietness of " The Mill House."

The writers selected for inclusion in *Columbia Poetry* 1932 (Columbia University Press. London : Milford, O.U.P. 10s.) an anthology introduced by Joseph Auslander, are to be commended for some excellent work. As Mr. Auslander says in his encouraging preface : " . . . we found much that was fine and honest and unindebted. We were impressed by a certain indubitable sincerity of concept as though the song was dictated by the bowels of the singer . . . Assuredly there are faults here. But these are lavish and hopeful faults swept in on the tides of an exuberant and promiscuous shore wash." The writers most distinctly remaining in my mind after reading are: Mildred Barish, Max Vernon Exner, Lena M. Hall, Edith Kane, Helene Margaret, Marion B. Shelton, and Florida W. Smyth.

E. D. BANGAY.

* * *

English Poetry in the Later Nineteenth Century (Methuen 10s. 6d.), by B. Ifor Evans, late professor of English Literature in the University of Sheffield, and recently appointed the successor of Professor Allardyce Nicolls at London University, is a critical commentary, written to fill a gap by giving a consecutive treatment to the poetry of the last half of the nineteenth century. The volume is dedicated to Professor Oliver Elton, whose book *The English Muse* we reviewed in a recent issue, and to some extent Professor Evans carries on the work of Professor Elton, for, while both authors work over some common ground, Professor Evans does not exclude living writers from his commentary, and deals much more fully with the last twenty years of the century, and so presents a more complete and better balanced picture of a period which Professor Elton in his work of tracing the course of English poetry from the very beginnings, had necessarily to pass over more quickly. Here we have a volume important for the integrity of its scholarship, and consistently interesting because of the author's enthusiasm, which gives a life and vigour to his criticisms. Professor Evans strikes a happy mean between the over-individualistic and the merely non-committal. His rational treatment of, for instance, the work of Stephen Phillips or Gerard Manley Hopkins suggests a sanity of outlook which strikes refreshingly after the narrow and sometimes spiteful type of criticism of which there has been too much recently. A feature of the book is that it gives generous space to minor writers of the time, and also includes a chapter on the humorous poets as Gilbert and Lear. Professor Evans knows how to present both sides of a question without giving the appearance of shilly-shallying, and his decisive style and clear-cut plan of work throws new light on a period which is interesting because it has only just shifted into focus as a whole.

Mrs. Agnes de la Gorce is somewhat ecstatic in her study of Francis Thompson (Burns Oates, 5s.), but she is an ardent Roman Catholic as well as a Frenchwoman, and may be excused her panegyrics because she is remarkably well informed in her really penetrating and personal treatment of her subject and her associated notices of the work of other Catholic poets of the period, Coventry Patmore, Alice Meynell, Ernest Dowson, Lionel Johnson, Hilaire Belloc and others of the peculiar galaxy which is still attracting poets to itself.

Alan Clutton-Brock's *Blake*, deservedly included in Duckworth's "Great Lives" (2s. net) is more reasoned than ecstatic. He can recognize the weaknesses of his subject without belittling him, and so writes a most useful, balanced and readable monograph on a tantalizing and elusive man.

Mrs. Catherine Carswell's *Robert Burns* in the same series is more superficial, a rapid summary of the salient features of the life of her subject, with particular reference to his amatory adventures and their influences.

Dr. John D. Ross deserves the grateful thanks of lovers of Burns the world over for his various volumes associated with the poet. His latest, *Robert Burns and his Rhyming Friends* (Eneas Mackay, 3s. 6d.), must surely be unique—a collection of really excellent contributions in verse addressed to Burns which the Poet had the gratification of reading in his lifetime. It is remarkable that these rhyming epistles and short poems have not been gathered together before, considering the enthusiastic activities of the many societies and clubs devoted to Burns. Dr. Ross has also published, in pleasing format, through Eneas Mackay, the unpretentious *Poems of Clarinda* (2s. 6d.), the fascinating and accomplished lady who was greatly attracted to the tender hearted poet and to whom he addressed the immortal *Ae Fond Kiss*. Clarinda, unhappily married in her teens to a base husband who deserted her, survived for fifty years the final parting with Burns in 1791.

Two Oxford books deserve commendation. *The Golden Book of Italian Poetry* (8s. 6d.) is not only of remarkable interest in itself, and for its concise notes on the contributors as well as their contributions, from St. Francis down the ages to d'Annunzio, but on account of the romantic life and efforts of the compiler, Lauro de Bosis, who was born in Rome as recently as the first year of this century, the son of the Italian translator of Shelley. In his early twenties he lectured on Italian literature at Harvard, and two years ago attempted to organize a liberal alliance in Italy, moved thereto by an idealism of thought and character reminding us of Shelley and the young leaders of the Italian Risorgimento rather than of our disillusioned generation. As Shelley was always dreaming of setting sail in boats and perished at sea, this ardent poet and scholar of our time dreamed of flight through the air and perished so, flying over Rome on October 3rd, 1931, scattering leaflets appealing to the citizens to rise in defence of liberty—an enterprise from which he never returned.

The other Oxford book is the 1805 text of the *Prelude*, which Wordsworth himself never printed, but which more than the 1850 edition reveals the growth of a poet's mind and the political and philosophical ideas unmodified by time. It is essentially the poet's own biography, and should be read as such rather than as the finished version of his great poem. Professor Ernest de Selincourt contributes an ample introduction and voluminous notes which help to make the volume much more fascinating than any modern psychological novel, and remarkably good value for 3s. 6d.

Mr. E. H. Blakeney, M.A., is indefatigable. We have been receiving verse and translations from him for a generation, and to the collection we have now to add a beautifully-produced edition of *The Festival of Adonis*, the XVth idyll of Theocritus, edited with a revised Greek text, translation and brief notes, to which is added a rendering in English verse of the Lament for Adonis attributed to Bion. (Eric Partridge, 7s. 6d.) The translation reads like a modern fragment, modified by scholarly notes.

Poetry and the poet in fiction have disappointed us in three examples this month. Helen Waddell's *Peter Abélard* (Constable, 7s. 6d.) is little more than a reconstruction of the unpleasantly tragic episodes in the career of the twelfth-century poet and theologian. With her qualifications and knowledge of the period, the author of *The Wandering Scholars* might have been expected almost to ignore the fleshly incidentsand raise the passion and the pain to a super-mundane height, which is really what mattered to both Abélard and Héloïse. The sad, exasperating, sensual conflicts we can read about in *The Stricken Lute*, recently reviewed, and other actual biographies. Fiction and a poet's equipment give Miss Waddell greater liberty. Not Abélard himself but his old friend Canon Gilles de Vannes is the more satisfying creation, particularly in his loyalty to Abélard and Héloïse when himself a stricken man, held fast within the November of his life—the November that Prudentius represents among the poets—" sixty when he began to write poetry and entered the kingdom of God. Ausonius, too, wrote his best poetry at seventy, after Paulinus broke his heart. It seems, thought Gilles ruefully, to be the condition of eternal life, for saints or for poets." Nevertheless, there is much beauty in this novel and much poetry, especially of Abélard's own coinage.

Lance Sieveking in *Smite and Spare Not* (Cassell, 7s. 6d.) disappoints similarly, but to a greater degree. There is a vision in the book, but it is a perverted one, just as the main thesis of pre-natal influence is an exploded theory. The greatness of the text as well as of the vision is never realized, and Quentin throughout remains an unnecessarily unpleasant and unsympathetic character, both in his inhibitions and delusions and still more so perhaps in his return to the sanity of the fatuous commonplace.

Again in *Flo* (Dent, 7s. 6d.), F. C. Boden misses his opportunity. He is developing as a poet, but not as a novelist in succeeding volumes. Flo is almost intangible. We really do not know her quality and character, and the best part of Mr. Boden's quality as a penetrating writer goes to the description, almost to the extent of repetition, of the actual daily working life of some railway draymen. He might have written an epic of labour, but the more he piles up details the less he tells us about his characters.

The Music of Growth (Scholartis Press, 3s. 6d.) attempts to put forward a simple and practical philosophy of life founded on universal experience and based on rhythm—an attempt to harmonize, as Sir Arthur Keith who writes the foreword points out, the culture and philosophy of the East and West, which the anonymous author has studied and absorbed. He concludes that the Way of Growth enjoins " doing, giving and moving on . . . to move on in harmony with a rhythm of nicely-balanced effort and recreation, keeping a controlled poise amid the counter-pressures of changing environment; to move with a frank delight in the forward march and the keeping of this poise—this is the secret of the philosophy of life whose physical, intellectual, social and political implications are so many, but whose principle is at once so simple and profound—the music of Growth."

Mr. John Masefield becomes yet more pontifical. In his preface to a straightforward verse narrative, in which horror is most appropriately piled on horror—*The Slaves of Rose Hall* (Heinemann, 3s. 6d.)—he tells the world that " some ten years ago, being eager to learn what speakers of verse there might be in this land *we* organized a contest in verse-speaking, which *we* repeated for several years in succession striving in each year to crown only those speakers whose methods pleased poets. *We* then decided that there were in this country at least fifty good speakers of verse, some ten of whom were exquisite, and that the poets interested in speech might do well to write for these good speakers, so that they might be employed in other ways than contests. *We* substituted for the contest a yearly festival at which the work of several poets was performed by the speakers of their own choice. . . . *We* decided to try to discover what young poets there might be in the land sufficiently interested in speech to write tales in verse to be spoken. *We* had the speakers : *we* wondered whether there would be story-tellers who would write for them. *We* offered prizes for tales in verse suitable for performance by speakers." (The italics are ours.) Mr. Masefield presumably considers himself a king of poets.

Mrs. Dorothy Una Ratcliffe's new "story-play " in three acts, *Gipsy Dorelia* (John Lane, 10s. 6d.) is charmingly told. The author can claim some of the Yorkshire Romany blood in her own veins, and in this play she tells how Squire Hardwicke married the gipsy girl, Dorelia. The disapproval of a mésalliance is shared keenly by the Romanies, and after the Squire's early death Dorelia marries again into her own people, " over the broom." Her loyalty to both her positions is the most endearing quality of her vivid nature.

The third series of *Songs from The Ship and Castle* finely maintains the high standard set up by this notable Bristol group of quietists who are exquisite in form and content. We are proud of having Rex Hopes, Donald Hughes, J. W. Norgrove, E. Brabant Parker and I. F. Sutherland within The Poetry Society which they so worthily represent.

THE POETS' FELLOWSHIP:

THE PREMIUM EDITOR'S REPORT.

The following are the awards and we congratulate the contributors concerned on their distinctive work :

S. W. Powell for his lyric " Who Loved the Earth." Mr. Powell's poem is outstanding. Thought and emotion are beautifully blended.

Melfin W. Jones for her sonnet " To my Hills."

S. R. Daniels for his lyric " The Day's Work," an accomplished poem and, at the same time, of emotional power.

W. A. Keeling for " Passing By."

Edith M. Walker for " Spring Wantoning." This poem is written in an ambitious form and courageously worked out and sustained.

E. P. B. Linstead for " Roller Skating Carnival : Belmont." Here the merit is originality, and a vivid sense of pictorial effect.

Among the authors " Highly Commended," must be especially mentioned :—Evelyn Couchman, N. K. Cruickshank, K. Ethridge, I. Sutherland Groom and D. H. Silver.

Highly Commended.

Frances R. Angus, Montreal ;
Greta Briggs, Clacton ;
Florence Bone, Ripon ;
A. T. Brown, Wandsworth, S.W.;
Evelyn Couchman, Menton ;
N. K. Cruickshank, Stoke by Clare ;
Amy G. Eddison, Wandsworth, S.W. ;
K. Ethridge, Ammanford ;
C.Desmond Greaves,Birkenhead ;
I. Sutherland Groom, Bristol ;
G. Capel Hall, Hove ;
C. M. Jeans, Dorking ;
Phyllis M. Lubbock, Eastbourne ;
Doris Major, Hendon, N.W. ;
R. McKie, Brighton ;
E. O. Measor, London, S.W. ;
Ida Mills, Whetstone, N ;
Beresford Richards, Alberta ;
D. H. Silver, Bedford ;
H. H. Slade, Ramsgate ;
L. Sowden, London, W. ;
J. Urquhart, Roehampton, S.W. ;
N. C. Yendell, Exeter.

Commended.

E. F. Alden, Haddenham ;
Vera Arlett, Worthing ;
Philip Bethell, London, N. ;
Karl van Beek, Montreal ;
J. J. Broadhurst, Heckmondwike;
E. Broughton, Derby ;
T. E. Casson, Bolton-le-Willows ;
Helen Hamilton, Torpins ;
M. A. Holben, Edmonton, N. ;
E. J. Howarth, Abertillery ;
J. Ivatts, Stockwell, S.W. ;
Erna Manners, Ealing, W. ;
Brian O'Neil, Liverpool ;
Iërne Ormsby, Thurgoland ;
Petronella O'Donnell, Clevedon ;
T. Pittaway, Frome ;
Nancy Pollok, Glasgow ;
Esther Samms, Luton ;
Arthur Smith, Wanstead, E. ;
Nora Shyvers, Upminster ;
M. Stewart, Bromley, Kent ;
Florence Woodward, Wolverhampton.

EVA DOBELL'S LATER THOUGHTS ON READING AN ANTHOLOGY OF WAR POEMS:

I have been re-reading an Anthology of War Poems that I had not looked at for a long time. Once I knew them well; but the book had been stored away for some years, and so I have come fresh to many of these half-forgotten verses; and it has been something of a disappointment. Some of the poems no longer thrill me in the old way. Perhaps I have not re-read them often enough to re-create the mood for which they were meant. Keats said that the test of a good poem was that it should come to the reader not as something strange but as something half-remembered; and the poems we really love do seem to us, even on first reading, things that " we have loved long since and lost awhile." But it is also true that to appreciate a poem fully we must read it often enough for it to penetrate to that part of the brain where alone we can " hear " poetry aright as distinguished from the part that does our practical thinking. Also I think we are still too near the war itself to judge war-poems dispassionately. We must leave that to posterity: and perhaps even posterity will not be able to distinguish true from false till they have a war of their own to apply as a touchstone? But though not in a position to criticize, I can put down a few thoughts that occur on re-reading these poems that once moved me so strongly.

Strangely enough it is some of the most exalted verses that leave me coldest; those that embody the wonderful idealism that thrilled through 1914-15. Alas, the years of protracted horror and the bitter disillusionments of peace have dimmed that glory. Those noble verses now sound almost a mockery. Yet bitterness is but a fog of the spirit that passes: they will come into their own again.

Verses of the flag-waving type no longer keep their old appeal. But to these one is necessarily unfair. Such lines as Barry Pain's " Kaiser and God " seem jingoish and self-laudatory now that we think of a broken enemy; but when they were written the issue hung in the balance, a balance heavily weighted on the Kaiser's side, and they were a fine cry of faith in the darkness.

I think the poems that simply narrate in graphic words some personal experience, without generalization or philosophy, still keep their old power. Wilfrid Gibson's pictures of life at the front do not fade. There are no sentiments here to grow tarnished or out of date. The scene itself is suddenly before us. We can supply our own thoughts and draw our own moral.

The poems that keep best their first freshness are those that are in touch with the universal; that sprang not so much from the war in particular as from those deep unchanging impulses of the soul, love of home, or grief for the death of the beloved. Those poems in which the soldier eased the aching longing of his heart for some familiar landscape, its beauty grown so wildly dear when perhaps never to be seen again, such as some of Hilton Young's, or Harvey's Gloucestershire songs, or Ledwidge's " The Lost Ones "

> " Somewhere is music from the linnets' bills,
> And thro' the sunny flowers the bee-wings drone."

Those poems of friend sorrowing over lost friend, as in Gibson's " Lament " :

> " A bird among the rain-wet lilac sings—
> But we, how shall we turn to little things
> And listen to the birds and winds and streams
> Made holy by their dreams,
> Nor feel the heart-break in the heart of things ? "

These verses and others like them, have their roots in the eternal things of our daily human life. Thomas Hardy's "In the Breaking of Nations " ; Masefield's " August 1914 " ; Laurence Binyon's " For the Fallen " keep, among others, their first magic.

A good poem has the power to wake in us, by rhythm and word-association, the very emotion that moved the poet himself. In war-time a great common emotion is already awakened, and therefore many lesser poems, that have not really such power, make an instant appeal, for they express the general emotion that we and the writer are alike experiencing. Perhaps many of the war-poets will not " last," but verily they had their reward. They encouraged and comforted many in that dark time, and won a love and recognition granted to few writers in ordinary years. There is only one thing that lasts—that indescribable thing we call, for want of a better name, Beauty. Only the poem, whatever its subject, in which that strange seed lies hidden, can flower to immortality.

* * *

The usual premium of £2 for the best poem or poems submitted to the Premium Editor during the month (without limitation of subject) is continued. Not more than four lyrics or one long poem should be submitted. MSS. should be addressed to " The Premium Editor, The Poetry Review Office, 36 Russell Square, London, W.C.1," before Aug. 1st, accompanied by stamped addressed envelope, and if criticism is desired, 2s. 6d. (For a more detailed postal criticism, 5s. should be sent.) Contributors must observe the elementary rule that name and address of writer must appear on each MS.

The Christian Science Monitor of Back Bay Station, Boston, Mass., U.S.A., would be happy for English poets to contribute to The Human Forum page. They do not wish to confine themselves to American backgrounds only. Poems that are human, dealing with a circumstance, a person or a place, but not just verse, would be welcomed.

THE POETRY SOCIETY LUNCHEON

SPEECHES BY REPRESENTATIVE VICE-PRESIDENTS

THE 24th Birthday Luncheon of The Poetry Society (Incorporated), held at the Hotel Russell on May 30th, was a very agreeable, representative and entirely appreciated affair.

The PRESIDENT-GENERAL (Commander Carlyon Bellairs), who welcomed the guests, deferred his general remarks as the first of the Vice-Presidents to respond to the toast of Poetry from various aspects peculiar to themselves—His Excellency Constantin Skirmunt, the Polish Ambassador—was to open an exhibition of illuminated MSS. and water colours by Arthur Szyk at the International Art Galleries later in the afternoon.

HIS EXCELLENCY pointed out that "a great poet does not belong to one nation, he belongs to the world. England has had at least two poets of world fame: Shakespeare and Byron. Both had a great influence on the literature of Poland. In a book entitled *Shakespeare in Poland*, published in 1923 under the auspices of the Shakespeare Association, you can see a list of Shakespeare's works translated into Polish. All of his writings have been translated and published in Polish, and among them *Romeo and Juliet* appeared in seven and *Hamlet* in thirteen versions. Certain works of Byron were translated into Polish by our greatest poet Mickiewicz—so *Giaour* and parts of *Childe Harold*. The Famous *Farewell of Childe Harold* became so popular in Poland that it was like a national song. After the great insurrection of 1830 the Polish exiles driven out of their country by the victorious oppressors loved the words: 'My native land good night . . .'

"The influence of great poetry is not limited to individuals. It affects nations and national life. So it was in my country. After the Napoleonic Wars three great poets appeared in Poland. In the darkest days of foreign oppression they became the leaders of the nation. We owe to them the fact that we have preserved our national soul, that we have kept the hope and the faith in the destiny of our country, and it is owing to them that we were able to resist until the day of liberation. We owe to our great poets the fact that we are Poles and not Polish-speaking Russians, Germans or Austrians."

LORD MELCHETT said it gave him great pleasure to be associated with the Polish Ambassador who has impressed all in this country with his deep understanding and appreciation of human life. Lord Melchett could well sympathize with His Excellency in his expression of all that poetry has meant to the Polish nation. He had had the great pleasure of visiting the capital of that great country, Warsaw, and realizing what all their aspirations meant to them. "England knows very little about poetry and the writing of the rest of the world, partly because we are so rich in writers and poets ourselves and particularly because being tucked away on a little island we have never had the occasion or the necessity of learning so many foreign languages. There is much great poetry that has been written in other countries beside England and a lot of useful work has still to be done in the translation of these works. It is a very great thing in the development of the mind for intellectual mankind to realize someone in another country in entirely different circumstances and entirely different training has conceived the same thought and expressed it in beautiful words and made it immortal.

" Poetry has really a very great connection with action. The great leaders of nations, poets who have inspired nations, have very often been those who have led and inspired men of action through their great works to embark upon an enterprise which they otherwise would never have undertaken. It is true of great national movements in all countries—true of the French Revolution and the great wars of the world and true of many of the greatest peaceful pursuits that have been undertaken. Poetry also records as no other art can record the works of great men in epic poetry, which gives prototypes that we live up to to-day, men on whom we try to base ourselves even though thousands of years after the poem was written.

" Apart from these two aspects of poetry and action, there is another more personal one. I myself believe in poets—one of the only things I do believe in—poets and poetry. A man who has not time in his life and has never tried to write poetry lacks something—lacks the desire to express what is inexpressible to us all, to try to catch the great emotions of his early youth. I was guilty of writing verse myself when a young man. I think is is true of many men of action who may not have become poets that they have been people who have profound emotions to express, who tried to put them into words and very often go on doing so all through their lives although no one or perhaps only a few intimate friends ever see the results. My father, all unsuspected, wrote verses all his life and I think that is not an uncommon or exceptional thing nor is it to be discouraged. The great thing about poetry is to write and write it all the time. We offer all too little time to it in our ordinary lives. If one writes bad poetry show it to no one—if one writes good poetry someone will be sure to discover it ! What is poetry ? Where is it distinguished from verse ? My father said, when I was first trying to compose, ' Never put into verse what you can better express in prose,'—a very hard school but a very good rule to follow. There are some things that can only be expressed in poetry. No prose, however fine, could ever express or capture that emotion and thought and immortalize it—and that is the real difference between poetry and verse. It is of all the arts the most divinely inspired. It has given me a greater pleasure to live an active and broader life because I like poetry, and what it means to me is that response between one human being and another which is really the principal reason for poetry itself, that desire to be able to keep the immortal phase of life and live it for all time as other humans themselves can understand and respond to.

"How valuable I think the work of The Poetry Society is, encouraging as it does young men and women who otherwise might have no chance of getting their work printed, by giving them a chance in THE POETRY REVIEW and getting together in a batch, lovers of poetry who can comfort and sustain each other in their mutual regard for the first and most expressive of all the arts!"

THE DUCHESS OF HAMILTON, said that architecture had been described as frozen music, and so poetry might be called the music of cadence and symmetry, although it seemed to her that some modern poetry was more like frozen discord! Poetry was the music of inspiration, and poets have always sung of the spirit of their age, and of the coming age. Anna Kingsford, the seeress, writes of the poet as "the highest type of mankind on earth," the fore-runner, so to speak in each age of the coming age, his heart beating in tune with the pulse of creation. The poet has no self apart from his larger self, and while other men pass indifferent through life and the world, the personality of the poet is divine, and so supreme and ubiquitous in consciousness. The poet feels more intensely than other men, and when the poet sings the voice of all Nature herself is heard, and the great continual cadence of universal life moves and becomes articulate in human language.

The Greeks held poetry a refining and humanizing influence, and through all ages there has been the Poet-Seer who has sung of that greater humanity, that unity of all creation. "The wolf shall lie down with the lamb, and a little child shall lead them," is a picture of ultimate peace to be brought about by the guidance of the poets of the newer evolution, such as Shakespeare, Browning, Shelley, Coleridge, Wordsworth, Swinburne, Edwin Arnold, William Blake, Robert Buchanan, Tennyson. Shakespeare makes one of his Princesses be reproved for thinking of experimenting on animals—"By such practice your Highness will but make hard your heart." Swinburne uttered a poignant plea for the pit pony. Blake says that,

"A Robin Red Breast in A Cage,
Puts all Heaven in a Rage."

The hoary old sailor in Coleridge's *Ancient Mariner* utters the pregnant words,

"He prayeth best who loveth best
All things both great and small;
For the dear God who loveth us,
He made and loveth all."

Robert Buchanan wrote in *Man with the Red Right Hand* a trenchant condemnation of the man who praying for mercy gives none himself. Howard Williams called Shelley "the prophet poet of humanitarianism." Tennyson alludes to practices he found monstrous in the lines,

"We shudder but to dream our maids should ape
Those monstrous males that carve the living hound."

The ameliorating power of poetry is exemplified by Hood's *Song of the*

Shirt which helped to bring a revulsion against sweated labour, and *The Cry of the Children* by Mrs. Browning caused legislation by popular acclamation preventing premature employment. The poets and seers bring new life to that which is mechanized and standardized. The spirit of materialism is always bringing down and confining men, but poetry bursts its bonds. The great lesson of the future is unity and co-operation. We cannot be merciless and receive mercy, we worship the God who is love, yet we teach hate to His creatures. THE POETRY REVIEW has often expressed in verse the need for a greater compassion. A poem by Miss Marguerite Pollard, *A Prayer for Hunted Creatures*, has been set to music. Miss Mary Mair has championed the cause of the animals in her poem *The Brute Creation*. Her Grace concluded her eloquent address by saying that she had just received another poem by a contributor to THE POETRY REVIEW, Mrs. Josephine Hughes, who wrote it under stress of feeling caused by the recent revelations concerning caged birds and the scandal attached thereto. She found the poem so apposite and full of feeling that she read it as a fitting illustration and termination of a speech largely concerned with the humanizing influences and uses of poetry.

THE REV. F. DE W. LUSHINGTON prefaced his remarks on Poetry in Education by saying that birthday celebration was of great personal interest to him who was present at the inception of the Society. From a humble beginning in 1909 that great Society had grown, he himself recently visiting centres in America, Canada, France, Italy and Holland. He went on to say that in his opinion no other country in the world, no group of nations even, had so rich a heritage of great poets as the English-speaking people except perhaps the Greeks, and English people were at last beginning to realize this.

One of the basic principles upon which this Society was founded was that poetry like music was meant to be heard. " I believe just as there are some people who should never be allowed to sing a note of music so there are some who should never be allowed to read poetry aloud." But owing to the great work done by the Society in teaching the art of speaking and reading verse there were now many more people in the world to whom it is a pleasure to listen.

Speaking as an ex-headmaster of an English public school, and one who has had a great deal to do with education in schools, Mr. Lushington found it extraordinarily difficult to see how the time in a school curriculum could be regulated so as to give time that ought to be given to the study of poetry. In a public school the master encouraged a few choice spirits to gather round him to hear beautiful poetry read, but this was not nearly sufficient and he hoped that among the propaganda of The Poetry Society there would always be an exhortation for people in season and out of season, in school and out of school, young people and old people, to carve one hour out of their busiest day, out of all the many hours of the day, to keep at least one quiet hour for themselves for the study of poetry. This one hour would prove the most valuable and the most creative to them in the education of heart and mind and soul, and it is the soul that is the most important.

Mr. Michael Roberts responded on behalf of the Younger Generation which he has represented in various ways, notably in *New Signatures* and *New Country*. He claimed consideration from intolerant and unsympathetic elders for the younger people who are trying to express themselves in poetry and who realize that their only excuse was to say something new and individualistic, that they must not be imitators but must see affairs and things through their own mentality. Even class consciousness entered into their view of a buttercup !

The President of the Kensington Centre (Mrs. Mends Gibson) felicitously proposed the toast of the Chairman who took the opportunity of making his general remarks from the Chair deferred from the opening of the toast list.

The President said that when their Vice-President Lord Desborough was invited to speak, his excuse was that he preferred to sit down and enjoy himself. He was reminded of a mayor who presided when Mr. Joseph Chamberlain was the guest of the evening and turned to that great man and said " Will you speak now or shall we let them enjoy themselves a little longer ? " Now Lord Desborough was a man who often presided over great functions and made a success of everything he undertook and the first thing your President said to himself when he realized that he was to preside to-day was, " why on earth instead of admiring Lord Desborough did I not study his methods in order to copy them to the best of my ability ?"

After thanking Mrs. Mends Gibson for her kind references to himself and to his wife who was prevented by illness from being present, and mentioning her important contributions to The Poetry Review, the President referred to Lord Melchett's former contributions to poetry and added that members of The Poetry Society could never agree that " big business " could be an excuse for giving up writing poetry. He was delighted to welcome Mr. Lushington as a Vice-President and original member of the Council. He agreed that the love of poetry should be fostered in the schools and he thought it should never be made a task or a punishment. How much better to read a poem with understanding than to torture the youthful minds by such general knowledge questions as those propounded by the headmaster of King William's College as : Who were the thirty women of Tilbury ? Who was the Cock Lane Ghost ? What age was Queen Charlotte when her Sedan chair was stopped ?

The President pointed out that the Society was now in its 25th year and next year would reach its semi-jubilee. They were anxious by the time they reach twenty-five years of age to have made as much progress as possible. During twenty-four years their progress has been slow but sure, they had neither blazed like the rocket nor fallen like the stick. A special reason for that day's celebration lunch was that their new quarters were on the other side of the fine square where The Poetry Society ought always to have been. They were now surrounded by the University of London, close to the British Museum and in the heart of the publishing and literary world. It was significant that the move had been followed by two substantial gifts to their library of poetry which they hoped to make the most representative in the country. While on the subject of gifts he felt he must refer to a bright example that would excite the admiration of our Chancellor of the Exchequer. The Countess van Bylandt, who kept our flag flying in Holland, and from whom he had just received a congratulatory telegram conveying good wishes to all present, in 1932, owing to the very difficult financial conditions, missed her usual generous donation of twenty pounds. In 1933 she not only sent twenty pounds for 1933, but another twenty for 1932 and fined herself an additional five pounds for delay! To Mrs. Hunt Bartlett and our American Vice-Presidents we owed much for their work in the United States, and Mrs. Bartlett by her articles in THE POETRY REVIEW had done a great work in familiarizing the British public with modern American poetry. To Mr. Oscar Gridley, our Chairman and Treasurer, a special debt of gratitude was due. He had been ably backed by Mr. Kyle, the secretariat, the executive committee and council. He needed only to mention that in spite of the very difficult operation of changing over their quarters there had been no hitch or delay in the issue of THE POETRY REVIEW or in the work of the Society. That reflected great credit on all concerned.

It was a pleasure to thank his Excellency the Polish Ambassador for his continued interest in poetry. He had told us of the great poets they had in Poland, and certainly as Poland had suffered much at the hands of Europe in past centuries one would expect her to be a land of poets if Shelley was right that " men learn in suffering what they teach in song." His Excellency was probably aware that two ex-ambassadors had won The Poetry Society's cup for foreign verse-speaking—the late Sir Maurice de Bunsen and Lord Rennell, better known to us as the poet Sir Rennell Rodd. Another gold medal established under our first president, Lady Margaret Sackville, had helped to keep up the high standard of verse-speaking in the country. That gold medal award was established with the active assistance and advice of Sir Johnston Forbes Robertson and Sir Frank Benson, and the Society was indeed grateful to them and Miss Edith Evans and other distinguished authorities for acting as judges and keeping up its very high standard of proficiency so that the B.B.C. sought our assistance for recommendations of verse-speakers and we were represented on their advisory panel. They had hoped up to the last moment that Sir Johnston Forbes Robertson would be present, but he had telephoned a most kindly message in which he said his doctor would not hear of it, especially as his illness was largely of a nervous origin and the excitement of taking part in the proceedings would have an ill effect on his progress. He could not remain calm and detached when meeting with old friends with whom he has been so closely allied and whose work he so much appreciated. He sent his good wishes for the success of the luncheon and the continued development and effectiveness of the Society in which he regretted that his 80 years will not permit him to take a more active part. In conclusion the President thanked all assembled for the encouragement they had given the council by their presence. It was a truly representative gathering, including Mrs. Tasker, the secretary of the large Hyderabad, Deccan, centre, and Lady Keyes, who had helped its success by acting as hostess at the meetings held at the Residency.

At the subsequent Annual meeting of the General Council, Commander Carlyon Bellairs was re-elected President-General of the Society, an honour which he said he appreciated most highly, and Mr. C. Oscar Gridley was continued as Chairman of Council and Hon. Treasurer, deferring to the wishes of the Council that he should still further postpone his retirement. The following were appointed to act on the Executive: The President-General, Mr. C. Oscar Gridley, The Hon. Eleanour Norton, Mrs. Mends Gibson, Mr. W. Marshall, Mr. F. Irving Taylor, Mr. J. F. Tilly, Miss E. Vaughan Jenkins (Hampstead Centre), Miss E. Barnes (Kensington Centre), Mrs. V. Adamson (St. John's Wood Centre), and Miss E. D. Bangay.

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THE ANNUAL GENERAL BUSINESS MEETING of THE POETRY SOCIETY (INCORPORATED) was held at the offices of the Society, 36 Russell Square, London, W.C.1. on May 4th, 1933.

The Hon. Eleanour Norton was elected to the Chair in the absence of the President-General.

The Minutes of the previous meeting were read, confirmed and signed.

Mr. C. Oscar Gridley, J.P., Chairman of Council and Hon. Treasurer, presented his report and financial statement, stating:

" I have pleasure in presenting the audited accounts of the Society for the year 1932. These have been already received and passed by the Executive Council and General Council, and also sent to the different centres of the Society.

" Our efforts have been much handicapped by the prevailing depression and unfortunate general financial stringency, but the work has continued with effectiveness and success, though our income and expenditure accounts are not so satisfactory as last year, mostly owing to a falling off in subscriptions, and the advertising revenue of THE POETRY REVIEW.

" We removed to the present offices towards the end of the year, and the Executive Committee is satisfied that the change will in every way be an advantage to the Society and its work. Our funds are ample for our requirements although certain special expenditure has had to be incurred, without entrenching on the reserve funds, which stood at about £1,200.

" It is satisfactory to report that during the first four months of the present year our income has materially increased as compared with last year, and we may look forward with confidence to the future, both from a financial and cultural point of view.

" I beg to move the Accounts be approved and passed, but shall be glad to answer any questions respecting them."

The adoption of the balance sheet was seconded by Miss McGavin and carried with acclamation.

The General Council was re-elected as follows on the motion of Miss M. D. Curle, seconded by Miss Mills: Commander Carlyon Bellairs, Mr. C. Oscar Gridley, J.P., Captain L. Cranmer-Byng, Commander Francis Cadogan, Mr. G. W. Eustace, Mr. W. Marshall, Mr. F. Irving Taylor, Lady Tenterden, the Hon. Eleanour Norton, Miss Julie Huntsman, Miss E. D. Bangay and Mr. J. F. Tilly.

Overseas Representatives: The Countess Marie van Bylandt (Holland) (to whom the Society was indebted for an annual voluntary subscription of £20 and a valuable statue sent on the occasion of the 21st anniversary. The Countess had promised to do her utmost to further the objects of the Society in Holland whenever opportunity arose), Mrs. Alice Hunt Bartlett (U.S.A.) (who for ten years had most admirably represented the Society and THE POETRY REVIEW in the U.S.A), Mrs. T. J. Tasker (India) (Mrs. Tasker was now in England and had visited the new premises, reporting enthusiastically on the size, keenness and devotion of the Hyderabad (Deccan) Centre), Mrs. E. Rosenthal (Portugal) (who had been the promoter of the Hyderabad Zenana Centre and had now removed to Portugal where she hoped to make The Poetry Society known in due course), and Baron Pilars de Pilar (Poland).

The Hon. Auditors (Messrs. Godwin & Taylor, King William St., E.C., chartered accountants), were re-elected and a vote of thanks passed for their services during the past year.

It was resolved to send a letter of thanks to the various Centre hostesses who had lent their rooms for meetings during the past year.

Mr. Marshall wished to propose a special vote of thanks to the Treasurer and Chairman of Council for his deeply appreciated work on behalf of the Society and hoped he would continue for many years in his dual capacity. Carried with acclamation.

The Director added that Mr. Gridley had recently given above seven hundred volumes to the Library of the Society—the first substantial donation the Society has received after 24 years existence.

He reported that the Verse-Speaking Examinations, which had proved the most effective way of reaching the young people, had been continued with great appreciation throughout the year in spite of difficulties. It was remarkable, also, how THE POETRY REVIEW had been maintained and how tremendously helpful his colleagues and members of the Society had been in maintaining the high standard of the periodical.

Votes of thanks were passed to Centre Presidents and Secretaries, and to the Director and Secretariat, whose services were warmly recognized.

THE POETRY SOCIETY MAINTAINS THE GOLD STANDARD

MR. GUY PERTWEE in awarding The Poetry Society's Gold Medal for verse-speaking at the audition on June 15th said: " William Pitt said ' eloquence is like fire: it needs fuel to kindle it, motion to excite it and grows brighter as it burns.' We of The Poetry Society might use this as our motto. We have got the words and the ideas that the poet has put before us, we have got the rhythm but we have got to put something of ourselves into it as well. I am a strong believer in form, but there is plenty of scope for us to put in our own feelings—(I don't say personality, we don't want ' personality ' in lyrical verse-speaking). It is not enough to give out the words as if they were out of the time-table. That is what I hate about a certain school of verse-speaking—it has no real brains or intelligence, but only a sort of synthetic feeling, utterly insincere and spurious, bleak and negative.

" The word ' elocution ' is a word that has been very hardly used. This subject of ours, which we feel so keenly about, years ago was the greatest art in the world. All through the Hellenic period and all the countries influenced by Hellenic ideas, the art of rhetoric was the be all and end all, but it had a very much wider scope and educational ideal in those days, including music, speaking, arithmetic, grammar and literature. Unfortunately the term rhetoric has become a term of reproach, and ' elocution ' seems lately to be associated so wrongly with a sort of cheap idea of just empty show, taking words and making them cheap vehicles for cheap emotion. I admire the splendid work of the elocution teachers up and down the country and it irritates me to hear people making patronizing remarks about the elocutionist. It is very largely the splendid work of the elocution teacher that is re-instituting this art of rhetoric and making poetry a great deal more popular among the masses. It is through such examinations and competitions as we have heard to-night and the splendid work of the festivals throughout the length and breadth of England—(I have judged ten in the last eight weeks, and even when I heard the same piece about one hundred and fifty times in the course of three days I was not bored because one gets such new angles and ideas)—that one now has such an extraordinarily good standard.

" I was particularly impressed during my tour by the work being done among the elementary schools up and down the country. I talked to the children and found that the instilling of poetry gave them new ideas, took them out of themselves, gave them something to think about, and the interesting point was the way in which they were tackling it. Eight or nine years ago it was impossible almost to sit through these elementary classes, but now it is quite a different thing. The teaching is good, the whole standard has been raised, and I do think this ' elocution ' is raising and re-instituting this great old art of rhetoric throughout the country.

" I repeat I am a great believer in form, but there is always the opportunity (and you have heard it to-night) of that ' something,'—the person steeps himself or herself in the words and the rhythm, but does not place or vary the sense or the rhythm or time but merges them. It is very important to mix the sense, the feeling for the words and the rhythm without overdoing it. The standard to-night was a good deal better than I have often heard in the past. It did not always come up to my conception of the Gold Medal, but on the whole there was a lot of good understanding, quite a good artistic standard, fine vocal qualities, and there are some very promising future Gold Medallists."

In his remarks to the candidates, Mr. Pertwee stressed "a very important point in the delivery of poetry—always get a real spirit of continuity behind the words, don't divorce the mind from the voice—when the voice is resting let the mind be working so that we get that rhythmical flow between ourselves and the verse-speaker. Another important point is the repetition of the emphasis. If one gets the same word occurring again one must be careful not to repeat the emphasis, do it once by all means, but the second time it must fall on a qualifying word." Mr. Pertwee awarded the medal to

MISS SADIE SHAVELSON, saying : " I was delighted with this performance. Miss Shavelson has a beautiful voice, with a real, resonant quality and feeling and good taste and an excellent poise, balanced both mentally and physically, and a true sense of poetry. She steeps herself in the lines, seemed lost in them and intelligently lost—they seemed a delight to her," and to

MISS ELSPETH CURRIE who " did ' the Guardian Angel ' so beautifully. She has a very nice voice and always spoke in good taste, clearly and musically—an artistic performance well understood. She also lost herself in the poem. I liked her ' Hymn to Pan ' very much, too—an extremely artistic performance."

Mr. Pertwee placed Miss Beatrice Underwood *proxime accessit*, " an exceedingly promising performer with excellent, sincere taste."

* * *

To the Editor, THE POETRY REVIEW.

DEAR SIR, I have just read your note to F. E. Slade's letter. Hurray to you, also to Mr. Noyes and Mr. Milton for their views on the same question. I am thankful that The Poetry Society is adamant on this point. As Mr. Noyes observes, " In any real poem the music of the poem, the cadences of the lines, do express the sense," but if the music of poetry is not of the first importance, we had better abolish poetry, because if the mere sense is to be paramount, prose can express it as well. Mr. Slade's remark that " rhythm still exists, *even* in free verse " (the italics mine) is particularly delightful, seeing that rhythm, at least in unrhymed free verse, is all that makes it poetry. Yours faithfully,

S. M. Powell.

Berwick St. James, Salisbury.

To the Editor of The Poetry Review.

Sir, I am reluctant to express an opinion on the point that Mr. Slade raises in reference to Mr. Ernest Milton's speech ; but I take the liberty of making two comments. First that on your own dictum that " the sheer music is of infinitely more importance than the sense." I listened to a recital given in Birmingham Town Hall by a famous poet of his own works, and was greatly impressed, without being at all pleased, with the poverty of thought that was not unfrequently expressed in musical language. I hardly think that you would find that every lover of good poetry would accept your dictum without considerable qualification.

If that be so, then it follows, secondly, that considerable injustice may be, and often is, inflicted on competitors in literary and musical competitions by placing the adjudication in the hands of one individual only. However, eminent he may be, and *relatively* well qualified for the task, he ought to be given no more responsible position than that of chairman of a small committee with an additional casting vote when votes are equally divided. Instances, I believe, might be given by the score which show the dissatisfaction produced owing to there being no appeal from the taste—in plain English, often synonymous with the prejudice—of a single adjudicator. Only recently two musical experts have expressed in the *Morning Post* diametrically opposite views of the merits of a well known and highly popular hymn tune ; and a large number of teachers notified the authorities of the Birmingham School of Music that they would not send any more pupils in for examination if a certain examiner were re-appointed. Of course, in quoting this latter instance, I have relied on what I have been told, but the authority I considered a good one. In any case, I could easily quote other instances, literary as well as musical, strictly within my own experience. My second comment follows logically on from the first ; but it is intrinsically independent of it.—Yours faithfully,

Hastings, May 3rd, 1933. Wilfrid Kemble.

[Our correspondent misses the cogency of our remarks which referred specifically to verse-speaking and not to the content of poetry. Verse without sense would not arrest the listeners' attention for very long however charming the speaker, but anyone with experience of verse-speaking will have realized how frequently the music or tune of a poem is subordinated to the sense and the speakers are literal rather than metrical and might more effectively confine themselves to prose.

We do not agree that in examinations and competitions a committee should act instead of one adjudicator, but we do agree that very frequently the adjudicator is very badly chosen and has few real qualifications for acting in a judicial capacity and is swayed more by prejudice than balanced judgment. We have had experience of ill-assorted bodies of adjuicators utterly differing in outlook and experience and, in fact, frequently lacking practical experience, and in consequence entirely unable to agree amongst themselves or to make anything more than contradictory awards.

A single adjudicator or examiner should bear the responsibility but should also convey confidence and conviction, and he should be chosen on account of his competence and experience and authoritative judgment. But frequently the judge of verse-speaking has no technical training or experience or, on the other hand, has no intellectual capacity and is not qualified to do more than judge voice-production. We have recently heard such an adjudicator speaking fine poems from which he had extracted all the poetry and rhythm and feeling, leaving a mass of words less connected and instinct with life than a child of ten would have spoken them.—EDITOR.]

* * *

Mr. Sydney Carroll's Open-Air Theatre is a blessed institution, and the summer weather has confirmed it. The shows have been delightful, the setting and production alike could scarcely be improved upon : *Twelfth Night* and *As You Like It* have been fitted exquisitely into this fascinating corner of Regent's Park. Starshine and moonshine and glow-worms and birds singing vespers accompany the charming songs of Feste and Amiens and Rosalind. Merrymaking and poetry mingle delightfully together in such perfect and natural surroundings, and the spirit of the greensward, so elusive on the stage of a covered theatre, here quickens every line of these exquisite comedies.

* * *

The Warton Lecture at the British Academy this year was a lively contribution by Mr. F. L. Lucas, who delivered a sweeping diatribe against modern poetry and criticism, insisting upon the sane vitality and keen sense of values which distinguishes THE POETRY REVIEW's work in criticism. We shall have a later opportunity when the lecture is published of referring to it again. At the moment our chief concern is the way in which it was received by a small and elderly section of the audience, who indulged in persistent laughter and loud giggles in the wrong places, as though the lecturer were George Robey, and nudged each other and wagged their fatuous heads like yokels in the *Midsummer Night's Dream*. The younger generation, against whose extravagances the lecture was chiefly directed, took it quite seriously and probably profited by it.

WIND AT NIGHT

A CRY in the air:
The world swings round
Peering behind
For that lost sound.

The river sobs
And the elm-trees shake,
As if hunters the haunted
Overtake.

And men lie a-listen,
Till overhead
The galloping wind
Goes east to bed.

A. DORIS L. WILSON.

BURIAL

LIGHT the tapers one by one,
Love lieth dead!
Close the shutters on the sun
Seeking her bed.

Thumb the rubric, point the psalm,
Tear-muted grief!
Place within her folded palm
The year's last leaf.

Should she waken, it will tell
All she would know;
Hear again a matin-bell
Chimed long ago!

Love is in her darkened room,
Coffin lid down;
Bear her to her quiet tomb
Through the still town.

Lay her in the shadows there,
Seal out the light . . .
(Suns will kindle in her hair
Through the long night!)

Turn and follow as before
To love's old place,
She will greet you at the door,
You will embrace! . . .

But of death and obsequies
Breathe not a word!
Such a theme in Paradise
Would be absurd!

KATHRYN MUNRO.

DIRGE

LIE lightly, earth, upon my love who's sleeping
With close-shut eyes, still hands, and quiet feet;
She grew so tired Life's restless vigil keeping—
Lie lightly! let her rest be long and sweet.

Lie lightly, earth, upon my love who's resting
With tender mouth and smooth untroubled brow;
She grew so sad Fate's stormy waters breasting—
She smiles again—lie lightly on her now.

Lie lightly, earth, upon my love who's dreaming
Of dear glad days ere hearts began to break;
And though my tears in bitter grief are streaming
Lie lightly, earth! I would not have her wake.

G. E. MERRICK.

SPIDER LILT

COBWEBS are lovely.
I pause and gaze.
Through morning haze;
For at my feet
In soft retreat,
Shimmering, wet
And exquisite—
I spy
A web
And spider
Wreathed in sleep
A violet
With dewdrop
For tear in her eye
All restfully meshed
On drenchèd rockery moss.

K. A. BRUCE.

GOTHAM

IN Gotham town it fell about
Upon an April day
When all the hedges fresh and green
Were flecked with snowy may,
The market wives of Gotham town
Did one to other say,
" What need we trudge to Nottingham
When Gotham is so gay ?
We'll send the cheeses down the hill
And let them roll away."

Oh ! Gotham hearts were young and glad
Tho' Gotham heads were white ;
There ran a stream beside the meads
That sparkled in the light ;
And there the elders of the town
Did launch with great delight
A sieve to go a-sailing in
A-down the water bright—
A-sailing down to Fairyland
All in their vessel slight.

The Gotham fields were gay with flowers
And all the birds did sing.
A cuckoo in a thorntree sat
And cried a welcoming
To skies of blue and all delights
That April breezes bring.
So out and spake a Gotham lad
To fellows wondering,
" We'll hedge the cuckoo round about
And keep the whole year spring."

Then out and spake King Oberon,
And merrily spake he,
" Since you have done such things to-day
Well pleasing unto me,
(For you have burst your mortal bonds
And set your spirits free)

Though yet in English fields you dwell
My subjects you shall be,
And I my fairy court will hold
Beneath your hawthorn tree."

Oh, long ago and long ago
The Gotham tales were told,
(For all the world was blithe and young
That now is growing old)
But every Gotham buttercup
Was changed to fairy gold
That in glad hearts for ever shines
And is not bought or sold;
For Citizens of Fairyland
Are Gotham men enrolled.

D. E. C. TOMLIN.

ROSMINIA

I SHALL remember her gay white hand like an uncut flower,
Resting her head upon it,
Dreaming a purple sonnet,
Even in slumber diverse, divine as an April shower.

I shall remember her wounded face, like a weeping star,
Fetching a liquid metre,
Making it wilder, sweeter,
Fusing the light of an angel's lamp at the Golden Bar.

I shall remember her laughing lips trembling with sighs,
Bowing her head and kneeling,
Lifting a look appealing,
Even in sorrow the pride of her soul was hid in her eyes.

I shall remember her form enthroned on a Roman stair,
Telling her love in Latin,
Couplets as smooth as satin,
Only a curtain of kisses above her to cover her hair.

I shall remember her honey-ed song, vibrant and high,
Fainter than whistling willow,
Lighter than foaming billow,
Rare as the rose that sprang from the fount of Adonis's thigh.

ENID BRADLEY.

HOLLAND

A CRYSTAL clarity of watery light
O'er earth and sky.
It is as though some witchery of sight
Quickens the eye.
The same Dutch clouds that Ruisdael knew
Float by to-day,
And in Hobbema's Avenue
The same lights play
This year.

Cuyp saw the sun weave on the River Maas
A spell of gold.
And still, above Dordrecht, while seasons pass,
The spell doth hold.
Red houses in the little streets of Delft
Are lovely yet,
And, in the afternoon, the Old Church bell
Does not forget
Vermeer.

An autumn evening in a Leiden close
Is yet secure
Against the siege of Time. Its deep repose
And calm endure.
The ruddy courtyards years ago
Loved by de Hooch,
In morning sunlight still aglow,
Greet people who
Come here.

Haarlem's black Mill turn not the winds of Change :
Her sails obey
Laws of some older order, sweetly strange.
In such a way
Years pass ; for Space and Time alike
Are crystalline
In Holland. Age to age, and dike
To dike all shine
Quite clear.

R. G. WALMSLEY.

THE DAY'S WORK

(The background of this poem is a country where tarmac is unknown and where the sun's heat can be intolerable to an extent never experienced in these islands.)

WITH light about my pathway
And light of lifted eyes
In the early, misty morning
I saw the sun arise.
I saw a path illumined
And while the day was new
I trod the trail of sunrise
Through brambles bright with dew.

With ache of daylong labour
And bruised and blistered feet,
The burning sun above me,
The air a shimmering heat,
With flies and foulness cumbered
The footsteps fail and flag.
Ere yet the tired spirit
Unloose the limbs that drag
I ask the use of effort
And whether not in vain
I left the glades of morning
For the dry and dusty plain.
Show then the goal of labour
That eye and heart may see
What ere the sunset cometh
The end of work may be. S. R. DANIELS.

THE DOOR

IF I but knew that he awaited there
Beyond the door
With eager arms outstretched to welcome me
I'd hesitate no more.

With steady hand the barrier wide I'd fling
And so pass through
Not thrust there inch by inch against my will.
Dear God ! If I but knew ! CAPEL HALL.

PARTING

THE anniversaries of my delights
fall still upon most inauspicious days
as the same date brings blossoms in and blights
and for one best are many bitter Mays.

No month is hallowed : though last year we kissed
yet this year comes a death, or *that* before ;
to-morrow's not so sacred to our tryst
as to the many partings that we bore.

Time's so untrue ! I should be dull indeed
to love you by the Calendar, my dear ;
like those incapable sorrowers who need
go to a grave to give the Dead a tear.

No, places, dates and names are not for me
the lasting monument to your memory.

UNION

MUSE, are you mute ? are there not any words
as beautiful for joy as for despair ?
does happiness hush you as the summer birds
mope on the boughs because of the bright air ?

The nightingale sings only for the dark
and has no note with which to greet the dawn ;
the generations of the poets hark,
and love her just because she's so forlorn ;

and should her song some balmy eventide
cease, and for ever, even as it soared
they'd think not after centuries she had died
but rather—that her Love had been restored.

So you, my Muse, who spent yourself with pain
are now quite still that Joy is come again.

WINIFRED E. GÉRIN.

BLACK RIDDLE

IN an infinitesimal gap between two eternities
We met.
How I loved you! how I hated you!
Till love prevailed,
Till love grew up to strength and wit.
What fun, what grief!
Two children sobbing in the night . . .
Two children laughing in the sunshine . . .
Sometimes innocent animals,
Sometimes starry gods.

Uphill, downhill,
Hand by hand,
Never parted,
We went our way,
Fighting our enemies,
Cherishing our friends so few:
Two that had grown into one
In that infinitesimal gap between two eternities.
Two that had grown into one and yet were two. . . .

The black riddle of it!
To have met, loved, endured, been all each to each,
We two among the myriads of the living, the unborn and the dead,
We two and none other,
To have come together, we two, out of eternity
To vanish into eternity,
After all that we have known and been,
Each in each, each to each.
The black riddle of it!
To have met, to have lived and loved, and then no more,
In this gap between two eternities.

Oh, my love, where go you?
And where go I?
Broken asunder,
Cast back into the darkness,
After this twinness,
After this wonder of life.

S. W. POWELL.

VIVAMUS, MEA LESBIA

If I profane with my unworthiest hand . . . ?

SHE pours out coffee from a soulless jug:
Her head aslant, her eye (blue . . . green ?) half-closed
She tentatively inquiringly inspects
The half-baked specimen sitting opposite.

Her blond hair curves and glints ; stinging light
On polished floors and glass-topped tables cuts
The eyes ; I remark her down her downy arms
Are dimpled at the elbows : velvet sheen
Of roses strokes my back ; the heavy scent
Contends with the slow blue curl of smoke, and wins.

From a hidden source behind the smoke,
Music starts and batters all the senses—

The question thuds, locked in a darkened room
(For now these hot days is the mad blood stirring)
It pounds on wall and wall, and screeches, cries.

"Two lumps—or are you sweet enough ?"
She giggles : the question dies for lack of air,
And we dance the next fox-trot.

R. G. SAWYER.

LAMENT IN SPRING

THERE is no meaning in a sunny day :
The sunshine mocks me now my love has gone.
Together we knew life : the hours slipped on
As we roamed glorious in youth's lovely way.
Aeons ago this was ; and I am old.
My love comes never more : how can this be ?
Does nothing lie in love's pledged loyalty ?
I cannot now range lonely in the gold
Of springtime : all the April heartache lies
Around me as I seek to shun the hills
And valleys and the lanes where passion fills
My soul with sickness of the truth that dies.
For I can find no meaning in the wind
Now he is gone and I am left behind.

PETER JONES.

GREY

THE colours all cry Yes! and Yes! But you
Breathe softly, No!
Glad colours, purple, saffron, scarlet, blue,
The Sun's bright circle through,
Sing and rejoice. With dusk, and falling dew,
Your spirit whispers low

Its calm negation. Wraith of tints that burn.
In sunset flame!
Grey ghost, that ushers in the day's return,
And brings to Earth new freshness, still you spurn
All change; and wrapped in veils of twilight, yearn
Ever the same.

No song. Only the hiss of falling snow,
Rustle of rain,
Faint sigh of brooding clouds—of mists that go
From visioned peak to shrouded vale below
In dim processional, dream-raptured, slow,
Across the plain.

Exquisite Shadow! Death of Beauty, still
Mysterious as its life!
Gently you quench a deeper thirst, and fill
The warring, wounded heart with peace—with thrill
Of respite, solace, calm surrender, till
It rests from strife.

ELISE FELLOWS WHITE.

DEFINITION

A SUDDEN closing of the eyes,
A swift withdrawal into space,
An immobility that lies
With strange remoteness on the face—

A silence, where were once sure words,
A stillness, where was once quick breath,
A closed, unyielding door—the hush of birds,
It's called by someone, *Passing*,
By another, *Death.*

ELIZABETH HAYNES SANDS.

PARENTS

THE daily rush was past, no trade wheels ran,
The suburb swathed itself in folds of night,
And darkness clothed the scene, except where man
With primal force had said, " Let there be light."

Upon the pavement's kerb, alone, I stood,
Awaiting there a corporation car,
When, suddenly, a child in merry mood
Regained his little ball, which bounded far,

A pretty boy, some two or three years old,
Who knew no fear, but ran upon the street.
His parents reached the spot and he was told—
" You must not run out there, my little sweet."

The father and the son enjoyed a game,
The father kicked the ball to show the boy
How balls are kicked by men of sporting fame.
The son, responsive, shared the father's joy.

" O Jim," the mother called, " O do beware !
And always watch to kick the ball well back,
Our sonnie is too wee to think, take care !
He'll dash upon the 'bus and motor track."

A cloud-like curtain drawn by unseen hand,
Dividing down the centre, rolled away.
A brilliant moonlit sky, and tree, and land,
And darkness sped, mistaking night for day.

No more upon a path of stone I stood,
For grass and flowers caught the bright moonshine.
I strayed within a clearance through a wood,
And saw no trace of lamps, no tramway line.

The man, his wife, and child were strangely clad,
The wolf, the boar, the bear had paid the price.
No rubber ball amused the little lad,
But rugged stick, with slit, and flint in splice.

The game went on, the father threw the stick,
The boy ran laughing. His the task to find,
And learn how spears are found in forest thick.
The mother watched, yet still a step behind.

"O Jim," the mother called, her voice was deep,
But tender with the note of anxious care,
"O Jim, I beg you watch your throw, and keep
The middle of the clearance, do beware!

"Our sonnie is too wee to think, he'd run
Where trees are close, and shadows thick and wild,
What should we do if we should lose our son,
Should mammoth come and catch our darling child?"

E. L. KINLOCH.

THE CHILD IN THE GARDEN

THERE was a green garden, murmurous with elms;
There was a child who played in the garden;
She ran with the dapples of light and shadow under the trees;
She danced with the dancing leaves that the wind set twirling in autumn.
(Turning, turning, shimmering, twisting; flying gold in the golden air.)
The flowers knew her and bowed their heads:
"Here comes our sister, our rose-princess.
She is like a moss-rosebud broken from its stem,
A wandering rosebud, dew-fresh and fragrant."
The birds knew her and sang their clearest:
—"Here comes our sister, our little willow-wren;
She glances and flutters among the lilacs,
She sings with the thrushes hid in the apple-bloom."
The child called to the flowers and the birds as her playmates;
She laughed with the joy of the April morning;
She threw herself down under the shade of the trees
And gazed up into the firmament of their branches
Lost in dreams.

Here is the old garden, dozing amongst its trees.
The birds sing among the branches. The flowers shine along the paths.
Where is the child who played in the garden?
The little girl with the long hair and eyes of dreams?
She is gone for ever. She is hidden. She is buried deep
Under the wrinkled skin of that old woman.

EVA DOBELL.

THE PHILOSOPHY IN THE POETRY OF ALDOUS HUXLEY

MOST of the reading public know Aldous Huxley as the author of *Brave New World*, but few know or appreciate him as the author of two books of poems, *Leda* (first published 1920) and *The Cicades and other Poems* (1913).

But perhaps the more perceptive, drawn to *Brave New World* by the glare of publicity it received, by the howl of newspaper critics hailing it as " disgusting " and " erudite and cynical," saw that behind the mocking sardonic humour, the brilliantly depicted horrors and the lurid fantasy of the thing, lay the serious moral purpose of a man who combines the sensitiveness of a poet with the lucid analytical power of a highly cultivated and scholarly scientist.

The " higher brows " of criticism—G. K. Chesterton, Rebecca West and Father Ronald Knox and others—found that the author of *Brave New World* was on the side of the angels, yet the lower browed (if more sensitive to public opinion) Harmsworth and Beaverbrook reviewers found him prurient-minded. What were we to think—could the angels have gone smutty-minded? However, all reviewers were agreed that Huxley was challenging and provocative. So the reading public bought the book to a man.

For my part, I had my opinions ready. I had read all Huxley's previous books and I knew exactly what to expect when *Brave New World* was announced. And when I heard the clamour of discordant criticism and comment I wondered whether the rowdies knew anything of the root of the matter—Aldous Huxley's hereditary background.

For Aldous Huxley and his equally well-known brother, Professor Julian Huxley of the University of London, have for their grand-uncle on their mother's side Matthew Arnold and for their grandfather, on their father's side, Thomas Huxley, the great Victorian scientist and man of letters. As soon as I learnt these facts I was not in the least surprised to find that Aldous Huxley's mind, as revealed in his writings, should show a combination—as unusual as it was interesting—of moral, spiritual and artistic qualities with an objectively reasoning scientific insight. Specialists in these various fields told me that this rich combination makes for second rate work in any given field ; but none could deny that the literary creations of this mind of many parts would be stamped with a certain breadth, originality and distinction.

I think it was Lord Henry in Wilde's *Dorian Gray* who said of himself that he combined an artistic temperament with a scientist's objective analytical power. Lord Henry, as most people have guessed, was a reflection of Wilde's own personality who had a famous oculist for a father and a celebrated poetess for a mother. Merely from this similarity of their hereditary psychology one would expect to find a likeness between Oscar Wilde and Aldous Huxley.

This is indeed the case. Both are complex in-bred men, not far off the " decadent school." Both essentially aristocratic, not un-selfconscious, emotional, highly intellectual, quick-witted, strangely combining a certain fastidiousness of person with a zest for life and a relish in poetic imagery for its own sake amounting to what the Puritan Bernard Shaw has condemned as " literary voluptuousness." Both insist on personality but are intellectually unorthodox and listless. The Irish poet, I am given to believe, actually indulged in debaucheries, whereas I have every reason to believe that Huxley confines his erotics to paper. But there is about them both that passionate aristocratic æstheticism with which Whistler has been labelled. Wilde was the " Lord of Language," the " grand seigneur " of his time—the friend of great artists Morris, Pater, Frank Harris, Whistler and Alfred Douglas. Huxley has been the close friend and disciple of D. H. Lawrence, the admirer of Blake, Baudelaire, Chaucer and Shakespeare, and has, perhaps, his best work in front of him.

It is because Huxley is as yet a comparatively young man, that, having put in the rudimentary colours of his psychological complexion, I will not attempt to paint into the portrait the background of the epoch or "zeitgeist" in which he lives in its correct tonal relationship or add those atmospheric effects which make up the influence of other poets on him and his own influence on the rising generation. As he has many years of development in front of him, these considerations must wait. I want this paper to be an intelligent piece of publicity for him—a compelling poster rather than a detailed portrait.

With these preliminary considerations to whet our appetites and sharpen our appreciation let us go through these two books of poems carefully noting the significant beauties, felicities and comments on life, and at the end try to deduce the poet's philosophy from the notes we have made.

In *Leda*, the title poem is, as its name suggests, the well-known story retold. It is written in the brisk narrative manner of Byron's *Lara*. Parts are juvenile, rhymes are often a bit forced, but every now and again we come across felicities and neatness of expression which tell us that this poet has no ordinary literary gift. Take this for instance:

She checked the race and on the river's bank
Stood looking down on her own echoed shape
And at the fish that, aimlessly agape
Hung midway up their heaven of faultless glass.

And here is the economy of the true artist:

Leda drew breath and plunged ; her gasping cry
Splashed up ; the water circled brokenly
Out from that pearly shudder of dipped limbs.

And here is a certain vivid creative originality :—"Jove in his high Olympian chamber" has been searching the world for some beauty to "assuage his desire." He sees :

And here and there towns, like a living eye
Unclosed on earth's blind face, towards the sky
Gleamed their bright conscious beauty. . . .

And this keen, detailed descriptive passage showing a real zest for beauty :

Couched on the flowery ground
Young Leda lay, and to her side did press
The swan's proud-arching opulent loveliness.

The short poems and fragments that follow are unconventional and often unpleasing. One feels that they are the writings of a lively young man whose first taste of life has made him a rebel against the intellectual and moral standards and conventions of a university and public-school education. But behind the surprising turn of phrase and apparent desire to shock for the sake of shocking there is clearly a very genuine and warm heart which is easily discouraged into cynicism and melancholy,

> The night drags on. Darkness and silence grow
> And with them my desire has grown,
> My bitter need. Alas, I know
> I know that here I lie alone.

That's not the sort of thing we expect from a young man in the prime of his powers who has had every advantage of birth and education. Or this, from *On Hampstead Heath*,

> Longing as I, for a shattering wind, a passion
> Of bodily pain to be the soul's anodyne !

Come, come, young souls shouldn't require anodynes ! Zestfully rebellious against accepted codes of thought, he sneers at Simon Stylites :

> And the saint from this high fastness
> Of purity apart
> Cursed them and their unchasteness
> And envied them in his heart.

In his effort to be original in these small pieces the phraseology is often obscure and incomprehensible, and the general effect is one of a rather loose impressionism which is disappointing after the many succinct, vigorous passages we have found in earlier poems. The *Philosophers' Songs* are not very philosophic and often frivolous. The luxuriant verbiage does not carry the requisite weight of meaning.

The *Poèmes en Prose*, although lavishly worded, are often uncommunicative and obscure, showing that the poet has not yet fully mastered this medium. But here is an example of the daring, almost Francis Thompsonian imagery, which runs through them :

> Sharp spires pierce upwards, and the clouds are full of tumbling bells. Reckless, breakneck, head over heels down an airy spiral of stairs run the bells. " Upon Paul's steeple stands a tree." Up again

> and then once more to the bottom, two steps at a time. "As full of apples as can be." Up again and down again: centuries of climbing have not worn the crystal smoothness of the degrees. . . .

And the last paragraph of *Beauty* gives us the first clue to a philosophy which is to be developed later:

> Ventre à terre, head in air—your centaurs are your only poets. Their hoofs strike sparks from the flints and they see both very near and immensely far.

Soles Occidere et Redire Possunt is not in any way a dignified or memorable memorial to the dead soldier to whom it is dedicated although it is a marvellous photographic representation of a day in the forgotten existence of a man who suffered, as the author tells us, "from that instability of mind produced by the mental conflict forced upon a man by his sensitiveness to herd suggestion on the one hand and to experience on the other." But I cannot resist quoting this magnificent self-indictment, put into the mouth of the subject of the poem, which should be written in block-capitals on the walls of all spineless æsthetes and over-educated undergraduates:

> "Misery," he said, "to have no chin,
> Nothing but brains and sex and taste
> Only omissively to sin
> Weakly kind and cowardly chaste."

Coarseness and obscenities, which the author clearly objects to, appear in this poem, and in a good many others, and the descriptions are pursued with an altogether unnecessary realism. I cannot see how any sane person could defend this sort of thing. Men like Shaw, Bennett and Galsworthy have pointed out the dark corners of life without finding it necessary to use obscenities to present the mental picture with force and clarity and to inspire the reader with the desired feeling of repulsion. With Aldous Huxley I think this practice is simply a weakness—almost a morbidity. There is a corner of the poet mentality (someone spotted this in Shelley) which is so horrified by ugliness that it is magnetically fascinated by it and finds itself compelled to describe that ugliness in its every revolting detail. There are times—especially when I am just in from a hard row on the Thames—when I feel like ducking Mr. Huxley for letting the hot-house luxuriance of his imagination run away with him.

The Cicadas and other Poems marks a big step forward. It is the work of a mature writer. In *Leda* Huxley had jumped into the deep end of the swimming pool of experience and, confident of his powers, has disdained to find his feet in the shallow end. So he merely splashed and gurgled and kicked and went under twice—but refused to go under three times. Now, after a gap of many years of increasingly successful novel and essay writing, we find him disporting himself in the waters of poetry with a splendidly virile confidence and poised grace. He is still surprising and mannered but his gestures are clear-cut and we can guess what he is about.

The first poem, *Theatre of Varieties* has all the realism, firm modelling, skilful composition and rich colour of a circus painting by Dame Laura Knight:

> . . . And all the space between
> Like the hot fringes of a summer sky
> Is quick with trumpets, beats with the pulse of drums
> Athwart whose sultry thunders rise and fall
> Flute fountains and the swallow flight of strings.
> Music, the revelation and the marvellous lie!

The last line is surely a masterpiece of succinct, epigrammatic profundity! There you have music dissected to the living core in a single swift stroke of the knife! In *Nero and Sporus* Huxley affirms his belief in the ultimate triumph of art. To him the art of living, artistic creation and the sheer delight taken in beauty are better than all the renunciations and self-mutilation of the Christians. To be a successful, vital artist he says that he must be humble in the face of objective phenomena (subjugate self to external things so as to fill the subconscious storehouse of the mind with material) and at the same time subjugate those things to the generalizing, abstracting, rationalizing intellect so as to mould wilfully the copious material of experience into the stones, canvasses and verses of living art. Too much humility in front of things is as bad as too much wilful arrogance. The correct balance of the two produces the vital work:

The wild beast and the victim both
The ravisher and the wincing bride
King of the world and a slave's slave,
Terror-haunted, deified—

All these, sweet Sporus, I, an artist
Am and an artist needs must be . . .

Christ died ; the artist lives for all ;
Loves, and his naked marbles stand
Pure as a column on the sky,
Whose lips, whose breasts, whose thighs demand

Not our humiliation, not
The shuddering of an after-shame ;
And of his agonies men know
Only the beauty born of them.

Christ died, but living Nero turns
Your mute remorse to song ; he gives
To idiot Fate eyes like a lover's
And while his music plays, God lives.

And in a later sonnet, *Armour*, where he protests against " every stout Sir Roger, stout Sir Ralph " who :

(Their ribs and rumps hermetically canned)
Securely laugh at arrow, sword and mace.

and in their brazen insensitiveness take hold of love so that :

. . . mortally possessed
Love dies. Only the vulnerable will
Holds what it takes, and, holding does not kill.

This is the not ignoble testament of the life-worshipper, a man of impulse, taste and imagination but whose curiously analytical intellect has vivisected the whole machinery of the life which he so loves and given us a concise recipe for it. But now, as we skip over many rich and glowing poems too suggestive and provocative for comment in the short space at my disposal, we come to *Orion* where a nobler belief is affirmed—the belief in the ultimate freedom of the will :

The choice is ours, the choice is always ours
To see or not to see the living powers
That move behind the numbered points and times.
. . . we are free, are free
To love our faith or loathe it ; to rejoice

Or weep or wearily accept . . .
Free, in a word, to learn or not to learn
The art to think and musically do
And feel and be, the never more than now
Difficult art harmoniously to live
All poetry . . .
The choice is always ours. Then, let me choose
The longest art, the hard Promethean way
Cherishingly to tend and feed and fan
That inward fire, whose small precarious flame
Kindled or quenched, creates
The noble or ignoble men we are,
The worlds we live in and the very fates
Our bright or muddy star.

Then follow more short poems and sonnets, all capably written with a fine mastery of technique, infinitely varied, infinitely rich and suggestive, sometimes showing a passionate delight in natural beauties. This from *Meditation* :

Vast forms of dust, tawny and tall and vague
March through the desert, creatures of the wind
Wind, blowing whither, blowing whence, who knows ?
Wind was the soul that raised them from the sands
Moved and sustained their movement, and at last
Abating, let them fall in separate grains
Slowly to earth and left an empty sky.

Or this magnificent ending to *Lines* :

Sometimes in winter
Sea-birds follow the plough,
And the bare field is all alive with wings
With their white wings and unafraid alightings,
Sometimes in winter. And will they come again ?

And also these deep glimpses of despondency, in *Mediterranean* :

. . . Moon of the soul
Call back the tide that ran so strong and deep
Call back the shining jewel of the sea.

And from *Pagan Year* :

On bright sad woods and melancholy sky,
Is there no cure for beauty but to run
Yet faster as faster flee hours, flowers and doxies
And dying music, until we also die ?

And now we come to the *Cicadas* the strongest, the most beautiful, the most chiselled, the most deeply felt of all this book of remarkable poems. Here, with all the heavy heart, the sincerity, the grand manner and diction of Fitzgerald's *Rubáiyát Omar Khayyám* he unburdens his soul. The theme of the poem is intensely simple—as are the themes of all great poems. The poet's learning fills him with doubt in the ultimate goodness of things but the ceaseless noise of the crickets in the woods rouses his vitality, reminds him of his deep love of life—and again he is happy. But the magical rhythm, dignity and rich diction of this poem transforms so simple a theme into a passionate hymn, a profound assertion of patriotism to life. Here are a few masterly verses :

For like inveterate remorse, like shrill
Delirium throbbing in the brain,
An unseen people of cicadas fill
Night with their one harsh note again, again.

Again, again with what insensate zest
What fury of persistence, hour by hour !
Filled with what devil that denies them rest,
Drunk with what source of pleasure and of power !

Now in my empty heart the crickets' shout
Re-echoing denies and still denies
With stubborn folly all my learned doubt
In madness more than I reason wise.

Life, life ! The word is magical. They sing
And in my darkened soul the great sun shines
My fancy blossoms with remembered spring
And all my autumns ripen on the vines.

Clueless we go ; but I have heard thy voice
Divine Unreason ! harping in the leaves
And grieve no more ; for wisdom never grieves
And thou has taught me wisdom ; I rejoice.

Many have said that Huxley is purely idiosyncratic. I think I can analyse this apparent idiosyncrasy into an unusual combination of eighteenth-century sentimentalism with speculative post-war free-thinking. An essentially old-fashioned heart working with the aid of the most up-to-date intellectual instruments has produced this nicely balanced compendium of emotion, æstheticism, spirituality and intellect which makes up the philosophy in Huxley's poetry. But the very fact that this philosophy is, so to speak, a concentrated abridgement of all that goes into other philosophies, because it is the *via media* between other schools, it is attacked from all quarters. It is easily misunderstood by those who have a modern heart (whatever that may be ?) and who work with old-fashioned intellectual tools ; or no heart and new tools ; or who are all heart and have no tools ; or who are just ordinary English gentlemen, full of public-school " decencies " and other conventional insincerities and who judge mankind by the standard of the cricket-pitch.

Huxley is to be compared with a modern departmental store—there are wares for everybody. There is enough varied stuff in this poised personality—this balanced compendium—to interest all tastes. All will be interested but few will be really satisfied because they will find no real gusto or exaggeration in the department of their choice—but how can one expect to find any such excess in a mind which prides itself on its all round balance and poise ?

And because I cannot express this idea of balanced personality better than Aldous Huxley has himself expressed it, I will end with this passage from his essay on Pascal in *Do What You Will* :

> " There have been whole epochs during which the life-worshipper has been the representative man. Our own Renaissance, for example. Looking back, the modern historian finds himself bewildered. Those brilliant and enigmatic personages who move across the Elizabethan scene—Essex, Marlowe, Donne, Elizabeth, Shakespeare, Raleigh, and how many others—they seem to him inexplicable beings. How is it possible for men to be at once so subtly refined and so brutal, so sensual and yet so spiritual, such men of action and so much enamoured of contemplation, so religious and so cynical ? Pledged to a respectable consistency of professional thought and conduct, the modern historian is frightened by a spectacle of human being who dared to be free, to realize all their natural diversity, to be wholly alive. Balanced between their inordinate excesses, they danced along the knife-edge of existence. We watch them enviously."

PHILIP BETHELL.

ARTHUR HENRY HALLAM

DIED SEPTEMBER 15TH, 1833.

THE waters of the Channel, a mist-wed Channel in the West, linger as they pass an old grey church that hides between the green of two sea-girt hills. Here is grey crag and here is the dark sea-wrack with its subtle-sweet perfume that gives strange dreams full of the secrets of worlds old and far. Here on torrid days the sea is like a sea of glass and the gulls just float with hardly a rise or fall. A land of mystery, a land of beauty that dreams under turquoise skies where the waters pass the pleasant shores of Wales or lull with a still mournful song under the hill where Arthur Hallam lies sleeping in the old grey church of Clevedon in Somerset.

Arthur Hallam was *the* friend of Tennyson, also he was engaged to be married to the poet's sister. Although so young—he was only twenty-three years old when he died suddenly at Vienna—he was an outstanding figure noted for his great gifts. The tablet to his memory in the old grey church at Clevedon says of him :

> "*One too early lost for public fame but already conspicuous among his contemporaries for the brightness of his genius, the depth of his understanding, the nobleness of his disposition, the fervour of his piety, and the purity of his life.*"

These words, written a hundred years ago, are a fine pen portrait of a most noble character. The tablet to his memory speaks of him as sleeping in "this obscure and solitary church." This is I think hardly a correct description of this grand old church. Such beauty could never be obscure, and though the church is great in its seclusion between the two green hills that stand above the sea, it cannot be described as solitary in the way of something overlooked, forgotten, unknown. This solitary church was chosen for the resting place of Arthur Hallam on account of his mother being the daughter of Sir Abraham Elton of Clevedon Court. This well known family are part of the history of Clevedon, and the Court has many literary associations, and is a beautiful old building.

The affection and esteem Tennyson had for him was so great that it is more than probable that he never got over the loss of this friend of his youth. It is known that for many years sorrow held him in a relentless grip—obscured the outside world for him, blighted what should have naturally been the best days of his life. The world outside has benefited for ever by this great sorrow of the poet for these well-known and beautiful lines have been given to us :

'Tis better to have loved and lost
Than never to have loved at all.

And rolling like the notes of a great organ we have that solemn *In Memoriam* full of the sadness of the Channel as it passes the church on the old green hills, full of the tears of the Clevedon sea.

The Danube to the Severn gave
The darkened heart that beat no more,
They laid him by the pleasant shore
And in the hearing of the wave.

There twice a day the Severn fills,
The salt sea-water passes by
And hushes half the babbling Wye,
And makes a silence in the hills.

And there he sleeps till the Angel of the Resurrection shall give his clarion call, he who inspired these lines so full of sadness, so full of beauty.

There is great controversy as to whether Tennyson ever came to Clevedon. The lines " Break, break, break," have been said to have been written in Clevedon, and on the Clevedon beach near the Old Church Hill, but this is disputed too. It seems hardly probable that the poet did not come to Clevedon to see the last resting place of his friend, though it is strange that apparently there is no record of his having done so. In my article for the *Somerset Year Book*, 1933, when writing of the Hallam Centenary, I mention the fact that the late Canon Haigh, when he was vicar of St. Paul's Church, Clifton, Bristol, gave a series of lectures on *In Memoriam* and he came over to Clevedon to see if he could find anyone who remembered the funeral of Arthur Hallam. This was, I believe, about twenty-five years or so ago. He found one old man whose father had been connected in some way with the parish church, Clevedon—I rather fancy a sexton or grave-digger—who remembered a very grand funeral at the parish church when he was a boy which from the time given and the description given was apparently the funeral of Arthur Hallam. It is strange that there is no record of the poet Tennyson having attended this funeral.

Clevedon has always lured the poet to its rock-bound shores—to its mystic atmosphere, with haunted channel. Coleridge lived here, and close to the old grey church on the hill some years ago the ruins of a cream-coloured cottage were to be seen said to have been the home of this poet. These ruins have long since disappeared and a cottage on the old church road is now shown as his abode—so that it is probable that he lived in both cottages.

Time rushes on! A hundred years ago hearts broke for the loss of one of England's noblest sons, one snatched by jealous death in his prime, leaving a sadness on the Clevedon sea, a sea that ever mourns under the old grey church on the hill!

Was Death so jealous that his Angel came
Black robed with pallid face this youth to claim?
And could not Life, Life radiant, golden, strong,
Wrest him from Death? He had not sung his song;
No Summer time for him to fade, then find
Grand silences of Winter, chaste, unkind
To youth's red roses, to the swallows' flight,
Where torrid seas gleam in a star-gemmed night.
Or was Death but a Messenger from far
Where the Redeemed white robed in glory are?
Did they his presence seek in unstained grace
Ere this world soiled his purity of face?
Was he so near to God, God could not wait,
Hastening to meet him at the golden gate?
Sweet mystic Clevedon with your mist-wed sea
Destined his resting-place on Earth to be,
Under the old church hill your waters mourn
A sea of tears, as if bereft, forlorn.

PETRONELLA O'DONNELL.

ANY ARTIST

I HAVE supped with the gods, and have seen
The dawn rising in desert places ;
Heard the " sea-maids' " mad music between
Sundown and dark ; loved phantom faces
In moon-washed orchards by night.

Yet, though beauty burns in high noonday
And each paving stone bears her footmark,
Here I dwell as a changeling astray—
Inarticulate, cold as the stark
Boughs of the orchard in frost.

Could I but find the white bridge that binds
Two worlds in one, and pass to and fro
Without sense of loss ! Time-lessoned winds
Tell of few feet that, silver-shod, go
In high noontide to Elfland.

DORIS MAJOR.

CALIFORNIA'S MYSTIC SEA

WITH Glamour laden
Comes the swells
Far out of Aidenn,
Long rolling, low.
What Romance dwells
In winds that blow !

Ah, warm delightful sea.
That flows to California's shore !
Ah, thoughts that come to me
From out the unseen space !
A white gull hovers o'er,
The salt air stings my face.

A glistening galleon sails along,
A bride's mist shimmers close above,
The eager sailor lifts his song,
A warm soft light rests on the sea.
And long long thoughts of life and love
Come gently stealing over me.

BEN FIELD.

PURITAN ANCESTRY

I LOATHE these hidden walls that strangely hold
Against all fierce attacks of heart's desire,
That check decision even as ice checks fire.
Must every wish and impulse be controlled
By creeds and standards that have long been old !
These are not virtues to which I aspire ;
But, baffled and coerced, I still admire
The stanchness of those hearts long since grown cold.

Oh, I shall struggle with a rebel's zeal
To fell the walls they built ; yea, unto death
I'll bruise my heart upon the stones and cast
My soul in fragments like sharp bits of steel
Against the bulwark—Then with my last breath
I'll thank my fathers' God the walls held fast !

B. Y. WILLIAMS.

THE OLD MEN

THEY are thin and stooping and very old,
The three old men who sit and talk
On sunny days at the end of the road.
They'll tell their ages in a breaking chant,
Seventy-nine, eighty and eighty-two.

Old Brown is crotchety and tired—
Nagging his daughter at home with sour complaints
In a querulous voice that age has ground
To a bitter edge. Outdoors he talks of fields,
Horses, and long, cool days at plough ;
Poaching o' nights, and harvests that are done.

John Stevens is mild and always kind,
Soft and shy-spoken as a child—
He's under the thumb of his grandson's wife,
A childless woman, hard-mouthed and clean,
Who quelled his patient spirit years before.
He knows the fields, but with a different eye ;
For every bird he has the call,
For every flower the old and comely name,
For every ill a hedgerow remedy.

Tom Green is blind. He rarely speaks
Though his lips are moving incessantly;
Sometimes he'll join in the thin, old chant
" Once . . . once . . . when we were young."

And so they meet when days are fine,
Thinking of half remembered times
Long and long and long ago.
The present lies lightly on them, as the year
Is gentle with faint green to outworn trees
That an uncaring time has led
Beyond the winter to unfruitful spring.

D. H. SILVER.

AUTUMN

AS the fair Queen of Scots went forth to death,
Array'd in crimson for the headsman's block,
The eyes of her affrighted foe to shock,
And wring cold tears from stones with latest breath:
Yea, at her going down, she exulteth,
Entering the portal, as it were of rock
Leading to hell, and maketh vaunt to mock
Blood with her blood-red witchcraft, as one saith:

So comes the poppied Autumn to her doom,
And clothes herself in robes of carmine cast,
To antagonize the fortalice of wan gloom;
And, of her paramour until the last
Mindful—the flaunting Sun—and her sweet bloom,
Wears yet more arrogant pride in skies aghast.

T. E. CASSON.

THE IDEAL FRIEND

THE world's lone crowds
Undaunted I pass through in conquering hope
That when o'ershrouds
The coming Night's relentless sable cope
I shall have met
My soul's dear mate. Then to a larger scope
My sun will set.

T. PITTAWAY.

AN OPERATION

A BRIGHT-EYED nurse
And a capable sister
Apparelled in hospital garb—
Spotless white overall
And a starchy cap ;—
A doctor dark and tall
With a pleasant voice,
A very pleasant, soothing voice ;
And in the operating room
The surgeon ;
To whose clear brain and skilful hands
That wield the dreaded knife
I now entrust my all,
My health, my very life.
You are God's agents in the ghastly fight
Against the foes of nature,
The bands of darkest night.
Yea, you are vested with His healing powers
Of infinite might.—
I need have no fear.

Myself, submissive,—
So has illness tamed me,
Resigned and calm I have grown—
Lying on a trestle, awaiting
A glimpse of the unknown.
Nurse with a reassuring smile
Gently takes my hand,
A gauzy pad is held before my face.
I understand
And close my eyes. . . .

A golden glow of light ethereal,
The radiant sunshine of another sphere,
With its intensity suffuses all.
Formless the scene—yet something gathers here—
Is that a track widening through the mist
And, oh, my God, the gate
Through which I now must pass?

The serious young doctor is beside me.
I see his face emerge from the misty glow.
I will not be afraid.
With him for guide to the gate I will bravely go.
I am quite conscious still. . . .
Why does my spirit linger here so long ?
Ah !
A strange sweet scent—
Something is happening to me—
I am overpowered—
I cannot breathe, but I must quickly pray—
Oh God, if this be death, take then my spirit
Into Thy eternal keeping !
A long-drawn wailing moan,
Then nothingness.

. . . . .

Whence comes this dreadful sound
As from a soul in torment far away,
Anguished crescendo dwindling to a sigh ?
It is repeated.
Slowly eyes open, lighting on a vase
Of yellow daffodils and flaming tulips
Brought to me by a dear friend yesterday.
And so I am alive
And breathing once again.
And it was my immortal spirit
Reluctantly returning to its home
That uttered those dread moans of pain.
One glance around, no more.
I see again my neat white-covered bed,
I feel the tightness of the bandages
That swathe my helpless head.
I am so tired . . . tired . . . and I must sleep.
But there is life within me,
God be praised !

EDITHA MELBOURNE.

THE VINTAGE OF DREAMS

A LITTLE book of some 42 pages (*Grecian Nocturne*, Poems by G. Laurence Groom : The Scholartis Press) sandwiched between letters of appreciation from George Moore and extracts from reviews comparing the author with Keats, appears to leave nothing to the critic except to add his little leaf of praise and go. It is not difficult to do this since there is music and colour in every line and there is something of the magic of Keats himself expressed in

> Filigree, the southern moon through the branches
> Hangs in a clear, green radiance, enchantment sets
> Her seal upon us. . . .

Or again, if we would recall the perfect pattern of a Grecian urn varied by one red sail drifting between the island of Euboea and the mainland of Boeotia, we may, like Keats, set and leave unsolved the riddle

> Who mans the helm ? Who tends the sun-filled sails ?
> What golden argosy delved from what sunless depths
> Of cave or ocean ? What naiad-woven wreaths ? . . .
> From what forgotten years who may not call ?

Perhaps there is allegory here, and, using the inward eye of imagination, we may see in Euboea the island that lies beyond our reach, and in the sail a symbol of dream-merchandise, or a gift of the gods impending, but never possessed by the mainlanders of life. But we are forgetting George Moore and the key-note of the Preface, which is unpardonable. No one tasted style with the refined and delicate pleasure of the connoisseur better than he. The master loved to roll a line on his tongue, give his whole palate to the enjoyment of a rare bouquet, discriminate between the living wine and its loaded counterfeit. He knew the values and, like all great creators of beauty, praised with no stinted measure the work of younger writers which appealed to him. So we may stand aside for a moment and listen :

> " I do not know when I have come upon a poem to compare with *Lovesickness*. The first lines were beautiful, and I recognized them as the beginning of a real poem, nor was I disappointed. Line succeeded line, each better than the last, until I come to the couplet in which you describe the shepherd of all time :
>
> ' Leaning hard on his crook the shepherd comes,
> Old as the night and day,
> And as he comes I hear his voice singing, singing
> From a world far away.
>
> You are in the forefront of poetry with that."

Where George Moore has written " Stet ! " we raise no irreverent pencil, content to leave the final judgment to anthologists as yet unborn.

The just-so touch is revealed in all these poems. There are no low levels, no matrix of confused entanglements around a streak of gold ; no " slip-shod Endymion " drags the poet down. Permission to dissent, which can only be obtained from Mr. G. K. Chesterton, c/o The Ladies' Lyceum Club, must be strictly limited to any apparent false quantities in the ideas expressed and not to their expression. Thus we might, our application being granted, confront the author of

> Would I were as the old shepherd, deep, deep
> in the well of years,
> Then should I have forgotten my love and sorrow
> and have wept all my tears,

with the singer of *Dawn*,

> There was no wind blew from the North,
> There was no zephyr from the South,
> No sound in all the world brought forth,
> Save your long kissing of my mouth.
>
> High on the dark Parthenic hill
> The marble columns slowly turned
> From purple dusk that held them still
> In bondage, to a rose that burned
>
> With fires Promethean ; then you cried
> Upon my ears with tender words. . . .
> The gates of heaven were open wide
> To Eros and the singing birds.

And then we might be entitled to ask " which is the *façon de rêver* and which the real thing ? "

Another question imposes itself insistently on the mind of the reviewer. Are we entitled to look for some philosophy of life in a book of modern poetry ? Not of the didactic or pulpit order, or even a system shoe-horned into couplets—for that is not the function of the poet in any age. But are we not entitled rather to look for some quick, intuitive suggestion, some flash of vision which illuminates for us the spirit of the poet's own time ? Who is reading poetry to-day ? Speaking generally only the children in the schools and the few dilettanti who use the colour and music that clothe ideas and the brief emotions they inspire " as a means of delighting their empty hearts." Here is a list of the subjects read by the public of the writer's County Library. School anthologies are, of course, omitted :

(1) Nature study.
(2) Useful Arts.
(3) Economics.
(4) Books of Travel
(5) Biography.
(6) Local History.

It will be noted that poetry does not even appear in sight, and yet this great public with its 70,584 readers is groping towards the inviolable serenity of spirit which may establish and secure it in an age of headlong change and a growing wilderness of bricks and mortar. Who will not sympathize with the drab souls, in dreary streets boarding

Ethel M. Dell's " Pullman " or Inspector Frost's " Omnibus " ? So we return with renewed hope to a book which has been praised by famous men and in the Preface we find the very sources of the author's inspiration revealed to us :

> " George Moore once wrote to me of ' the pressure of life that is sometimes too great to be borne, and the unconquerable aversion from the world which cannot be explained, only felt.' That pressure, that aversion drove me from England to wander, first in the Alps ; then through Italy and Sicily into the land of eternal youth, Greece, for in spite of the centuries of tragedy she has endured she is a happy country."

Grecian Nocturne is the result of this " unconquerable aversion from the world " with its consequent pilgrimage from unhappy England to happy Greece. There, with Anacreon, she learns to brush aside the importunities and problems of the hour :

τί με τοὺς νόμους διδάσκεις
καὶ ῥητόρων ἀνάγκας ;

and all she asks of her teacher is

μᾶλλον. διδασκ παίζεινε
μετα χρυσῆς ’Αφροδίτης.

How well she has learnt her lesson !

Dear, let not the moment go,
Time will take it, as he must
So the jasmine blossoms blow
An hour and then are dust.

Take the lips upraised to yours
Kiss the breast that's warm for you,
Do the butterflies and flowers
Ask if love be true ?

Taste the moment as it flies,
It may not pause, howe'er you will,
Dust shall dim the brightest eyes
Soon, and you be still.

" Looking into these blue skies it is impossible not to believe oneself immortal, not in the sense of living for ever, which heaven forbid ! but in a sense of disembodiment, of freedom from the trammels of the body."

Yet the sense of You-and-I-ness weighs down the sense of disembodiment in her poems. Rarely does she transgress beyond the first step towards Unity, the brief embrace of mortals. Some trammels and superfluous wrappings of convention are cast aside—the climate is very gracious—but the result is always the same. We are trapped in a warm and sensuous world of lotus isles and jewelled waters.

> Here are we utterly vanished out of time,
> And all the sophistries of men and creeds,
> Into the sunlight of this southern clime
> Blended, for here is all that sorrow needs.

And here is

> Peace, the enlargement of infinity
> Where we, world-weary, may at last find rest.

But why in the name of the League of Nations and the International Economic Conference " world-weary." Surely the shoulders are all too slim to have borne the burden of Atlas even for a moment's fantasy. Only the Titan and his kind who bore the burden knew the weariness; and they have vanished. By an act of supreme imagination the greatest of the English poets took upon himself both the shame of the world and the Titan's travail:

> The weariness, the fever and the fret
> Here, where men sit and hear each other groan;
> Where palsy shakes a few sad, last grey hairs,
> Where youth grows pale, and spectre-thin, and dies. . . .

Is there any need to labour the conclusion that the author knows little of the weariness of Titans, or that the star of Keats still lacks a consort? Yet we should not belittle the results of a bodily pilgrimage to modern Greece whether undertaken " from pressure of life and unconquerable world aversion " or other motive. Great poetry is not merely inspired, it is inspirational, and sweeps us away on flooding tides to far horizons. But there is also poetry—and the name may not be withheld or denied—which offers us a cup of brief oblivion. Two words from the Greek anthologies are recalled to the reader. One is *nepenthe*, the draught that brings forgetfulness of mortal grief; the next is *anodyne* soothing and releasing human pain. Here then is *nepenthe* and *anodyne*, or so it seems to us. Perhaps, however, this book has slipped into the wrong reviewer's letter-box owing to a geographical confusion between Euboea island of dreams, and Boeotia mainland of rude realities. The Editor of THE POETRY REVIEW, himself a distinguished traveller in these realms, might have pricked from his list of Euboeans, seated in the coolness and décor of their ideal homes, one to do it ampler justice. Yet even a rough Boeotian wiping the sweat of his vineyards from his face, and the hair of goats from his sleeve, may accept with rustic grace this draught spiced with the *hellebore* that cures the madness of mainlanders, and secures an hour's oblivion from their small affairs.

> And my poor soul, life's wanderer,
> Drifted from out my body then,
> Across the sea, Oh far away
> From the grief-haunted roads of men,

Into the peace of those bright hills
Whose names fall like a lover's kiss
Out of the memory of night. . . .
Aegina . . . Salamis. . . .

Grecian Nocturne is a light and lovely thing.

L. CRANMER-BYNG.

Dr. Bottomley's Cathedral Festival Play.

The amazing total effect of the four Gospels has one almost miraculous point. These gospels are written in the simplest language; they are, in number of pages, far less than the ordinary novel, and bound in one, appear almost diminutive in comparison with the biographies of bishops or famous mortals. Yet they give us a living incomparable picture of Christ and those about Him. We venture to affirm that all authors who, drawing on their imaginations, have attempted to amplify the picture have, however good their literary work, merely blurred, or confused the outline.

Dr. Gordon Bottomley's play of *The Acts of Saint Peter* (Constable and Co.) was written to be staged in Exeter Cathedral. The Cathedral itself had to be considered and music introduced suitable to the setting. We have no doubt that the entire effect was very attractive and, it may be, impressive to those who are unable to grasp the beautiful simplicity of faith without the sensuous appeals of music, lights and colour. But the play, read in the quiet of the study without these accessories, should convince us of the reality of the period, and should, also, stir our sympathy with the personality of the disciple, St. Peter. Unless it achieves these things it is no more than a gorgeous panorama.

Therefore the crucial question is: Is this Peter, who dominated the Cathedral stage, the Peter of the Gospels enlarged for us by the sympathetic spiritual understanding of genius? Is it the man ever urged to be doing and thereby blundering in his doing, the fundamentally faithful soul with the human touch of cowardice in the face of brutality; the man who leaped out of the boat to walk the sea; who, outstripped by his fellow disciple in running to the grave, yet plunged into it in order to see for himself, and to satisfy his agony of despair? Is this the erstwhile coward who became the spokesman of all his fellows and who braved the malice and the anger of the rulers? We find all these marks of personality in the short records of the Gospels, but the figure of Dr. Gordon Bottomley's play possesses a far less firm outline. There are some touches that do not ring true; Peter is made to say of Christ: " A tall man came down the quay," a little, thing, it may be, but why this adjective " tall," except for the sake of the line? And he goes on: " I told Him your mother is ailing; He only said: ' All will be well with her '." The gospel words are that when they were gathered together in Peter's house, " anon " they tell Him of her. Then there occurs an imaginary scene between Lazarus and the daughter of Jairus, in which both lament having been brought back to life, and the girl cries out to Peter " O Sir, why did you help the Nazareen To force life to return to me? Why? Why?" and Peter makes this hopelessly inconsequent reply: " I saw you dead! I have seen such a tall girl as you awake from death in her bed," as if he fancied the miracle to be enhanced because the child was " tall." We would not wish to be understood as debarring imaginary scenes or words. Browning's *Saul* is entirely imaginary, but the power of that great poem is that it enlarges the view; it might well be true, just as his *Death in the Desert* gives an added light to our conception of the " beloved disciple." In these poems Browning sees gloriously. Dr. Gordon Bottomley appears to view with a mundane eye, and, in consequence, produces unspiritual speech.

Then, with one step, we are at the Last Supper and the chorus and semi-chorus sing the marvellous words of Christ. That speeches uttered in the agony of the soul should be practised in singing is, we own, an offence to us. We remember that the only singing mentioned is the hymn, or psalm, sung before going into the sinister garden. Doctor Gordon Bottomley treats Judas in the way of the modern novel, as one who honestly intended so to arrange events that the almighty power of his Master would defeat all His enemies and, in a moment, prove Him to be the veritable Messiah. We are somewhat weary of this notion. It in no way accords with the Divine dealings, for Paul persecuted men and women and had on his conscience the murder of a saint, but because all that he did was in an absolute honesty and a conviction that thus he was serving his God, he was forcibly rescued or shown the " Way." Had Judas been indeed heart-honest and working for his Lord's glory, in however mistaken a manner, he would not have come to his terrible end and " gone to his own place." The tendency of to-day is to call black white, or to confuse both to produce a dull grey. Those who know Jesus as Christ cannot conceive the mind and heart of Judas, but in his time not even the most devoted of the disciples, not even His mother, recognized fully the Divinity. Let it be left at that.

In one of the daily papers the critic regretted that the Sacred Figure was not shown on this Cathedral stage. Such a presentation would have been unbearable, art as well as the Church forbade any bringing in a human Lord of the Temple. The simple devotion of the players at Ober-Ammergau is on an entirely different plane.

To the tomb in the early dawn Dr. Gordon Bottomley brings *Mary of Bethany*. In the records it is Mary Magdalen. We fully recognize the slight confusion we are in with regard to these Marys, but again, the modern idea is to argue away the sinfulness of the woman out of whom seven devils were cast. Be that as it may, the lesson of the Gospels is that the repentant sinner was nearer to the heart of Christ than the just souls who despised Him. The dying thief and the harlot will ever be the eternal types of those He restored. Judging this play merely from a dramatic point, the very drama is weakened by substituting the Mary who chose the " better part " for the Mary who had been a sinner.

After these events years are passed over, and we are shown Peter as an old man and hear a conversation between him and Paul. Follows an unreal scene of Roman ladies and courtesans, a pageant without life, and it is noteworthy that the author presents only women as followers of the Saint; but " ye, my people, are men," and the character of Peter must have made an especial appeal to men.

Finally Peter is persuaded by these women to flee from Rome to escape Cæsar, and the tradition of the Lord meeting him on the Appian way is introduced. Traditions are occasionally beautiful, but would Drinkwater's drama of Abraham Lincoln have passed unscathed by the critics if the author had interweaved legendary doings of the great man ? Peter is as actual and living as Lincoln, and a play concerned with his acts should represent him as faithfully and with as austere an accuracy as that demanded in writing of men nearer to our own day.

The last speech of the lovable disciple is fine and dignified and in keeping, and when he passes out of sight the leader and the chorus sing:

"Creator of life and man,
Now thanksgiving we raise
For the life noble and humble
That has passed before us here."

And the chorus:

"The light of his short day's span
After a million days
Shall be strength for those who stumble,
His weakness shall be dear."

As a play the end should have come here. The succeeding lines and chorus are in praise, not of Saint Peter—not of his Master—but of Exeter Cathedral; as if a man should extol the oyster-shell and not the pearl contained therein. There is, moreover, an awkwardness about such lines as:

" Let no more maimers dare
Its violation. O where
But here shall we bring our vows."

This may be sung but it defies reading with any pleasure or sense of beauty.

We concede, as before, that the performance in the Cathedral was probably impressive and beautiful, of the nature of stained-glass windows, in which we admire the colours and the rich garments of the saints therein portrayed, but we do not recognize them as the lowly, ardent, despised and suffering friends of our Lord.

ARTHUR HOOD.

A KEY TO THE GATES OF BEAUTY

The Gates of Beauty, compiled by Wallace Nichols (Ward Lock, 7s. 6d.) is something new in the way of anthologies ; something that has never been done in quite the same manner before, and which therefore has no real rival amongst the twenty-odd modern anthologies which figure in my own small library.

The compiler states that his book is not intended to take the place of *The Golden Treasury* or *The Oxford Book of English Verse*, but surely only the most unobservant of surface-skimmers could pretend to make any mistake of that kind ? True, there are poems which are common to all three anthologies, but the greater part of the contents of *The Gates of Beauty* has been culled from fields as yet untrodden by the anthologist, and includes a very large proportion of work by living poets which has not appeared even in Mr. J. C. Squire's collections.

It was refreshing to open this new volume and find that its very first poem was from the pen of Sir William Watson, and that no less a poem than the magnificent Prelude to his *Selected Poems* of 1928, under the title of " Ode in the Day of Transition," a fitting " spiritual preface " to this well-named collection of noble work from most of the great poets both of our own time and of earlier periods, who have contributed inspired verse to the sum of England's poetical wealth.

From Chaucer to Chesterton, from Bacon to Blunden, from Dryden to De La Mare, from Herbert to Housman, from Milton to Masefield, from Shakespeare to Service, and from Sir Thomas Wyatt to Sir William Watson—what a splendid hunting ground for such a treasure-seeker as Mr. Wallace Nichols, himself a poet of no small distinction, and found deserving of inclusion in Dr. Wood's serious studies of poets of to-day.

Studying the book from the point of view of a reader of poetry (sometimes in public), I was much interested to find that the contents have been arranged in programmes, really very ably planned. At a moment's notice I could, with this book at my command, produce a reading suitable for almost any fairly cultured audience. The average anthology would not provide me with anything of this kind ; it would be divided into chronological periods, or authors, or groups of narrative poems and the like, which would necessitate hours of choosing, sorting and arranging in order to be of any practical service for programme purposes.

In *The Gates of Beauty* I should find ready to my hand such a programme as this :

I. Ode in the Day of Transition. Watson.

II. Upon Beauty, six poems, the authors being Marlowe, Keats, Shelley, Yeats, Masefield, and Wallace Nichols himself.

III. Period Song Recital, VI. Modern, nine poems, among the authors being Abercrombie, Binyon, Noyes, Watson, and Wolfe.

IV. Sonnet Recital, twelve sonnets, among the authors being

Sidney, Shakespeare, Drayton, Milton, Rossetti, Alice Meynell, and William Watson.

This selection of programmes would furnish me with an hour's reading (aloud) of conspicuous loveliness and sound worth, without the cost of more than a few minutes spent in decision as to which groups to choose. No tiresome hunting of indexes, no weary hours spent in typing from a score of books, following upon the hours squandered in selecting, rejecting, and finally deciding on a programme which may be found to be quite unsuitable when the audience to be entertained is actually assembled. Were one " Gate of Beauty " to be deemed unsuitable, it would be the work of a few seconds to close it and set wide another " Gate "—provided that one had taken the precaution of gaining rather more than a nodding acquaintance with the various programmes. This brings us to the title : it is significant ; it means something ; it has not been written down because it looks pretty. To me it means exactly what it says : these are but the gates, to open to us, as readers, the treasure-gardens of each and all of the poets chosen for us by one who has spent years of patient and loving labour in the selection which he now offers for our delight.

If this Anthology send us to our neglected Milton, our Arnold, our Dryden, Herbert, Wordsworth, Spenser and Tennyson, it will have done well.

Shakespeare, Keats, Blake, Shelley, Francis Thompson, and the Rossetti and Browning pairs, will always have devoted followings, and many of the modern poets are comparatively widely read, but it has done my heart good to see eight of the poems of Sir William Watson included in no less than seven curiously different programmes, and also providing the previously mentioned " spiritual preface." For my part I should have welcomed even more of Sir William's poems, and fewer examples of the work of some other writers, such as Byron, Blake, Burns, Dryden, Pope, Shelley and Wordsworth ; but that is a question of individual taste, and there is no single poem here that I would wish away, taking it upon its own merits and considering its suitability for the programme in which it figures.

I have found a misprint or two, notably in Herbert's " Virtue," where the day is made the " bridle " of the earth and sky ! But these are printer's errors, and the only wonder is that there are so few of them.

Wallace Nichols has made a very catholic choice of poets, but has by no means included all who might have claimed admittance to the book had popular taste been considered. There is no example of the work of T. S. Eliot, of Siegfried Sassoon, of Hilaire Belloc, of Ralph Hodgson ; and but one each of the poems of A. E., Edward Blunden, Robert Bridges, Rupert Brooke, G. K. Chesterton, W. H. Davies, John Drinkwater, W. W. Gibson, A. E. Housman, Rudyard Kipling, Alice Meynell, D. G. Rossetti, Robert Service, and Humbert Wolfe.

But the key to each gate has been provided, and it will be the fault of the holder himself if he does not insert it in the lock! The very fact that some of us might have chosen a different key for some individual gate, should be but a stimulus to our curiosity! The fact that Mr. Nichols has chosen A. E.'s " A Mountain Wind," with its inimitable third stanza:

" Trail of celestial things:
White centaurs, winged in flight,
Through the fired heart sweep on,
A hurricane of light "

sends me to my bookshelves to compare this choice with " Vale " or " The Things Seen."

The choice of Davidson's " Piper, Play ! " is fully justified,

" Nameless as the stars of night
Far in galaxies unfurled,
Yet we wield unrivalled might,
Joints and hinges of the world ! "

But perhaps Mr. Nichols will forgive me if I say that " Insomnia," is an even more individual poem.

" To Milton—Blind," would have been my own choice from the work of Stephen Phillips—but Mr. Nichols' selection is doubtless more in accord with what would have been the wish of the poet himself; and it fits into the programme which it so notably completes with a perfect roundness.

If I may register a mild objection to the Kipling selection, it is based on the idea that " A Ballad of East and West " will not be at all easy to read aloud, which is, of course, judging the book's contents from a merely personal angle. Service's " My Friends," on the other hand, is exactly the poem I would pick to read rather than any of the " Songs of a Sourdough," or of the " Rhymes of a Red-Cross Man." The theme is authentic enough to one who has known that stern country; the rhythm is that of the trail itself; and the three-fold rhyme-scheme, with its repetition in the first and last stanzas, makes it eminently readable. Of the Anthology as a whole what more fitting can I say than (in the words of Sir William Watson):

" Thy charm was a most rich withholding;
Thy beauty, a perfect incompleteness."

ÏERNE ORMSBY.

Love in Contemporary Verse.

Apropos of the discussion on " the neglect of Love as a subject for modern verse " at a recent Fellowship meeting, particular care has been taken to notice poems on Love in a few new books recently submitted for review. The *Love Songs and Poems* of Arthur Heybeard Brookes (Cornish Bros., 5s.) is a book full of poems on this theme, but the poems are disappointingly facile in construction. The naïvety of the Elizabethan song writers is a quality that cannot be re-caught; its emulation only results in archaisms and artificiality. Facile-ness again, and colloquialism, mar the poems of Elise Emmons, though her sentiments are pleasant and courageous. Her book, *The Rapture of Spring* (Stockwell, 2s. 6d.) is prettily illustrated. Love, incidentally, is not conspicuous among her themes. In *The Garden of the East*, by N. W. Thadani (Bharat Publishing House) on the other hand, Love is preponderant as subject matter . . . as seen through the flowery, moonlit, almost cloying love-sickness of the Persian poets. Mr. Thadani's verses are " not translations or renderings, they are rather intended to re-create the spirit and idea of each master of song in a new form, with just enough of the original atmosphere to be reminiscent." How he has succeeded in this it is difficult for the ordinary reader to judge, but the skilful and pleasing quality of his verse can be shown by a quatrain of Omar and a stanza of Hafiz:

Music and wine! the Moon is shining bright;
The Charmer too is in the arms of night.
  Raise from the dust this heart of fire, O love!
Give me the glass and fill it with delight.

Kindle the lamp:—the breeze has fanned the fire,
  Now blowing from the garden where she lives.
Kindle the lamp: the rose of heart's desire
  Is glowing in her garden, and she gives
Its fragrance to the winds to comfort thee.
  Kindle the lamp: it now will soon be night,—
The star-lit page of love's unwhispered lore.
Awake and dream; let wine and music be;
  And see but once the world-illuming light:
Kindle the lamp,—to quench it evermore!

There is an excellent biography of the writers at the end of the book.

A more voluptuous Love is the absorbing topic in Harry Clifton's *Dielma* (Duckworth, 7s. 6d.). His title poem has somehow the flavour of Mr. Blunt's " Esther," though the verse is very differently handled. He mixes a vigorous straightforwardness of diction with deliberate inversion and checked rhythms. His philosophy of life is disclosed in "Annunciation of the Millennium," and is interesting and provocative even when not always convincing. A short poem, " To Irma, Who Asked About Love," is the most suitable for quotation here, though his verse is usually more " difficult ":

Love takes and bends and binds you,
Like a tree bowed in a storm;
It beats and shakes and blinds you,
You see nothing but love's form.

However you go, love finds you,
Though space and time lessen its grief;
Yes, love has the power to grind you,
When years had, you thought, given relief.

You will find love hard to bear;
Alive it cuts and skins you,
And useless your frequent prayer,
For freedom and life to rinse you.

But love is a lovely garden,
And love is a flaming joy,
And love is a gentle warden,
To rest with, from all earth's annoy.

The imagery is too brittle and the thought too introspective to hold much of Love in *Pantomime* by Christine Wilson (Lane 6s.). The attractiveness though lack of significance in

An elephant wears lily pads
They're grey instead of green
And frame his head like a bouquet
And when he walks they sway.

You never hear an elephant
When he comes up the street,
Round and neat
Bound to his feet
Are lily pads again;
And when he moves he makes no sound,
Only a hush falls all around,

is preferable to the futility of:

Like a whirlwind
Time was at my back.
I fell exhausted
And my hair blinded me
And gave me sleep.
Through doom I slept
And woke
And looked again into the sun:
No wind—
No time—
Only another date
To souvenir a dream,

but the writer has qualities of observation and originality that could be better harnessed to better things.

The Rev. S. Val Green also touches upon Love in several poignant little poems. The macabre atmosphere is well conjured up in his title poem, *Walpurgis Night* (Literary Guild, 2s. 6d.), but it is not typical of his work. His verse is immature as yet; in a poem like " Thoughts " he frequently slips into the pitfalls that beset the novice—the unrestraint—the forced scansion :

Like strains of music
Stealing through the night,
Come thoughts of you, dear,
Creeping through my brain;
And as they come they nestle,
And with sweet caress
Remind me of the warmness
As your lips I press.
They coil around me
Their sweet warm fingers,
And press their loving
Hands upon my brow;
And now I sleep in comfort,
And dream your golden hair
Has caught me in its meshes—
And I too glad to stir.

but there are lines in " The Cathedral " that show him capable of considerable achievement :

. . . silently, some angel-haunted eye,
When the majestic Queen rode through the clouds,
Snow-called and heavy in their pompous pace,
And earth was black and silver—pine and snow—
These columns rose like alabaster stems. . . .

But to the favoured one on whose full gaze
The finished structure broke, came awe,
And gasping wonder at such thrusting grace,
That forced itself into his very soul. . . .

The colours and the dignity of worship. . . . .

And many years have brought their bloom and blight. . . .

Her spires, which yearned like lovers' arms to heaven. . . .

I know that God has in a richer sense
Each virtue that in man is evident;
He laughs with children's joy, exults with fame,
Mourns with the lonely and consoles the sad;
With what supreme contempt then must He look
Upon inconstant man in wayward mood—
Who serves the moment rather than a cause.

Clemence and Clare by Joan Adeney Easdale (Hogarth Press, 3s. 6d.) is the love story of these two, in a modern setting, told half jauntily and half tenderly. It matters not that the lost engagement ring is recovered inside a fish, unbelievably, because Clemence and Clare

are reconciled, and we are satisfied. The guests at the party are sketched in both styles :

> An old duchess in a bright blue wig
> Was eating a ripe and succulent fig
> From out of a dish with a silver rim
> Embossed with dancing cherubim.
> Her dress was purple-black brocade,
> The cuffs with shining stones inlaid,
> Representing birds in flight,
> All made from jade and chrysolite. . . .
>
> Clemence rose from the marble seat
> And left the depths of his dark retreat,
> And coming out into the light
> His eyes shone black as lucullite,
> Searching through the company
> For the place he thought where Clare might be. . . .
> He felt so far removed from Clare,
> The very brightness of her hair
> Betrayed the greyness of his own,
> Like flowering moss upon a stone. . . .
>
> Clare was dressed in oyster silk,
> With crystal drops like frosted milk,
> As if the zodiac embraced
> Her, with its stars around her waist.
> Clemence went and stood by her,
> She did not glance, she did not stir
> A single rimple in her gown,
> Nor turn his way when he sat down.
> Where once an empathy had been
> A lonely void now stretched between ;
> The only nearness that was left
> Was knowing both felt sad, bereft.

The remaining poems are mostly too " imagist " to be impressive ; they merely startle. E. D. B.

John Brown's Body, the most distinctive work of Mr. Stephen Vincent Benét, was warmly acclaimed by THE POETRY REVIEW when it appeared. We now examine his collected *Ballads and Poems* 1915-1930 (Heinemann, 7s. 6d.) with particular interest, wondering how the author succeeds in short and lyrical pieces in comparison with the large-canvas work of the American epic. In the latter there were many deliberately rugged passages serving as a foil to the lyrical quality of others and combining with them to give a vivid effectiveness to the whole theme. Here in the shorter pieces there is more attention, as is meet, to form and finish, while nothing of imagination or vigour is lost. The section of satirical poems seems unnecessary, satires generally are—except that they may do a little steam-releasing—and not infrequently Mr. Benét mars his serious poems with a facetiousness that shows itself in forced rhymes ; but we will judge him chiefly by his capacity for writing some very fine sonnets. The sequence under the title of " The Golden Corpse " show him to be highly sensitive to imagination and language, and master of both. These outstanding lines, drawn here and there from their context, show a marked sustaining of the theme—that of lost youth :

Winter Connecticut. . . .
I hate you as a bastard hates his name
When your cramped hills are hostile with the white,
But, every year, when March comes in the same,
A frozen river rolling in the night,

I must go back and hunt among your snow
Something I lost there, much too long ago.

. . . . .

It was a silver dagger in the blast.
It was the first of youth, and it has passed.

I left it in a bare and windy street
Between two sets of bells whose casual chimes
Answer each other janglingly and sweet,
Like the concord of long repeated rhymes.

I left it in a since-demolished bar,
And underneath a rainstreaked paving-stone.

. . . . . .

All summer cannot quicken it with heat,
Nor Spring perturb it with a budding bough,
Nor all the glittering devils of the sleet
In snowing winter rack its quiet now.

. . . . . .

. . . the years have hardier tasks
Than listening to a whisper or a sigh.
They creep among us with a bag of masks
And fit them to our brows obsequiously.

. . . . . .

I offer to the shadow in the air. . . .
A branch whose leaves cling to the withering staff
Like precious toys of gilt and scarlet paint,
An emblem Life and Death share half-and-half. . . .

. . . . . .

So much is memory. For the future, this.

The checkerboarded house of Day and Night
Is but a cavern where a swallow flies
To beat its wings an instant at the light
And then depart. . . .
But while the swallow fluttered and was quick
I have marked down its passage in the dark
And charred its image on a broken stick
With the brief flame of an uncertain spark.
The fire can have it now, the rain can rain on it,
And the ice harden like a god's disdain on it.

The Ballet Suite of W. Bernard (Oxford University Press, Humphrey Milford, 5s.) best interprets the often individual thought of its author when he frees his verse from the products of Jazz: cacophonous sounds and stresses, violences of syntax and leaping allusions, and allows it to flower into a natural music. That " The Harvesting " is an excellent poem, these lines from it will show:

Time paused, the great God Time, with softest tread,
Seeking relief from the bright glare of harvesting
—Or so he said:
Relief from the worn cry of stubbled earth,
Whose wasted form
Shrank from the hot kisses of the sun
. . . To plead:
" Leave me to sleep, to sleep a little while
—For I have given birth."
The god smiled; stretched his limbs to rest:
" Sleep, then, a little while, for sleep is blessed.
In sleep is life—that burgeons to the scythe of wakefulness:
In wakefulness they reap the flower of life;" . . .

Edward Shanks prefaces his new collection of *Poems*, 1912–1932 (Macmillan, 10s. 6d.) with a few remarks on poetry in general. He finds that the faculty of writing verse is dwindling within himself, and, from a detached and scientific point of view, he is anxious to know why this should be. The question causes the reader to study the poetry that follows in an enquiring spirit, but Mr. Shanks' poems, often very beautiful, always finished and polished, have the virtue rather of throwing the reader into a receptive frame of mind. Perfection of finish, smoothness and careful workmanship nonplus the critical. There is nothing in Mr. Shanks' work of the restless checking and changing of mood and tempo which characterize much modern poetry. These poems, whether short or long, are self-contained, self-consistent, and stylistically exquisite. One thought or one mood is held, crystallized, and at the same time given a suggestion of a deeper meaning, of purpose and continuity.

> " Long after we have ceased to be
> The sun will light in bush or tree
> And shine unchanged ; the high turf hill
> Shall stand up in beauty still,
> And all the valleys that we knew
> Put on again the summer's hue,
> When we are gone, when we are gone,
> And are what green things feed upon."

Can the reader guess why it is then that this poet finds the power to write verse diminishing within himself ? Perhaps Mr. Shanks himself gives us just a hint of what the reason may be when he concludes his preface with the remark, " It helps no one, either writer or reader, to suppose that there is something magical or ultimately inexplicable about any poetry, even the highest. Shakespeare and Tupper wrote under the same laws—one with more success than the other." Does not Mr. Shanks, both in criticism and creation, place the emphasis a trifle overmuch on the intellect, so missing just that touch of the " ultimately inexplicable " which he denies ?

One of the interesting " How-and-Why " Series is *The Adventure of Poetry* by Mr. Frank Kendon (Black, 2s. 6d.). He addresses those of school age and introduces poetry reading as an adventurous discovery that gives continual delight. Although he " talks down " to his audience at times, his enthusiasm for his subject carries much before him, and his chosen poems for study are from no stereotyped selection. I venture to point out a small error of explanation. . . . Milton's " twisted eglantine " is not the wild rose but the honeysuckle, whose rope-like stem is easily recognized here. Even the botanists admit that particular poet's licence.

It seems odd that the Great Playwright should have made a poem out of the rape of Lucrece while succeeding writers mostly dramatized it. Following the lead of Arnaud and Ponsard in his own language, M. André Obey stages the tragedy in *Le Viol de Lucrèce*, and Mr. Thornton Wilder uses his rare quality of prose to give us a translation of it, *Lucrece* (Longmans, 6s.). The original author wrote with a keen sense of the stage, and some have said, after seeing the production in London a short time ago, that the allotment of much of the plot to " narrators " was an effective innovation. In reality the device seems to be the modern counterpart of the Greek choruses, who acted as commentators and linked up the events between the scenes. Very little action is left to the actors in this case, but the play is intensely moving and the stage-craft particularly interesting when Tarquin slips from pillar to pillar—they serving as a succession of doors between the rooms leading to Lucrece's chamber.

For those to whom the *Collected Poems* of Eva Gore-Booth, published by Longmans in 1929, are not accessible at the price of 8s. 6d., there is now a small volume of *Selected Poems* published by that firm at 3s. 6d. Her friend, Esther Roper, again writes the foreword, and the poems are very representative of her verse. Perhaps her prose work is difficult to break up into selections, but a book containing some prose excerpts as well, especially from *The World's Pilgrim* would have been even more acceptable.

For those who have time for literary problems Mr. Percy Allen's *Plays of Shakespeare and Chapman in Relation to French History* (Denis Archer, 12s. 6d.) provides interesting and intriguing reading. Behind the vexed question of authorship is the larger one of at what events and what contemporary personages are the plays of Shakespeare actually aimed? And in attempting an answer Mr. Allen deals extensively with the intricacies of the religious wars in France and the protracted and abortive negotiations for the marriage of Elizabeth with François de Valois. Among the conclusions he arrives at is the reasoned decision that Monsieur, Catherine and Guise are the originals of Cornwall, Goneril and Regan in *King Lear*.

A little further back in time are the Odes of Pindar again rendered in English verse by Alexander Falconer Murison (Longmans, 10s. 6d.), with voluminous mythological and historical notes which make the Odes, now vividly and graphically translated, a graphic description of and commentary on the Pan Hellenic Games, the whole being so arresting and well done and so impressed by the early Greek spirit that they should be taken as a handbook to the revival of the Olympic contests.

The Practical Wisdom of Goethe (Allen and Unwin, 6s.), is a valuable anthology of the idealism of daily life of the great German poet, collected most carefully and significantly by Emil Ludwig, who reveals a hidden store of riches, pointing out that there has never been a national treasure more neglected and therefore so unfruitful as Goethe's wisdom in Germany. Two-thirds of the quotations, which are assembled under suitable headings, represent Goethe in his old age when, after a struggle of sixty years waged against himself as much as against the world, the essential wisdom of the man won through. The centenary celebrations will have been justified if, by means of this excellent guide to the art of life, use is again made of the Olympian thought and counsel of the Sage of Weimar. Much of it might have been written in our own time, so timeless is the expression of genius.

* * * *

A Glastonbury Romance by John Cowper Powys (John Lane, 10s. 6d.) shows the novelist as poet,—this stupendous novel being in every sense an epic, a revelation of elementals beside which the average modern novel appears slight and shallow. Powys has already established a name for himself in contemporary English literature, but this book is the finest and most ambitious work that he has achieved. Taking the town and community of Glastonbury, steeped in historical association and mysticism, Powys has peopled it with a vast crowd of figures drawn from his imagination and has followed out their lives with all the truth of actuality, delving into the inmost recesses of their souls, creating a wealth of living creatures yet welding them all together by the swing and force of his narrative. Running as a strong and gleaming thread through the texture of the book and the lives of the characters is the deep force of mysticism and religious feeling, which the locality of Glastonbury evokes in Powys' mind. Few writers to-day have so intense a feeling for English earth, a feeling which calls up with such force the rivers, thickets, hill sides and fields and even particular trees and stones. All through the book his treatment of nature is incredibly stimulating and Wordsworthian. Despite the great length of the book, the reader will be carried along, almost overwhelmed by the tremendous force and power of the imagery, by the superb language, the deep creative thought and bold, frank exposition of character, which go to make this immensely important book.

The flesh and the spirit are interwoven in *A Glastonbury Romance* and a somewhat similar claim has been made for *Yet in my Flesh*, by M. E. Mitchell (Dent, 7s. 6d.), but it cannot be sustained. The great promise of the book and its text, the promise of poetry interwoven with realism and carried to a splendid height, is not sustained. The scientist who absorbs and quotes *Hyperion* passes out of the story to leave it sadly lacking in either psychological or physiological conviction and we have still to wait for the intellectual thriller of real intelligence that will convincingly relate the development of the immortality of the flesh. Writers with poetic instinct are turning to the novel for expression but few of them can combine the two forms of expression.

Mrs. Naomi Mitchison follows Mr. Kipling in interspersing pertinent illustrative poems between the graphic stories which make up *The Delicate Fire* (Cape, 7s. 6d.). *The Delicate Fire* itself gives a pleasant picture of the apparently exquisite life surrounding Sappho and her friends and rivals. More realism creeps into later tales but a sense of beauty and wonder is preserved throughout, justifying Mrs. Mitchison's use of a dual medium of expression.

Mr. J. S. Fletcher is an inveterate novelist apparently content with *Leet Livy* for his chief contribution to poetry. This powerful poem gave one hope that Mr. Fletcher's return to Yorkshire country life in *The Grocer's Wife* (Hutchinson, 7s. 6d.) would have found him less agreeably conventional as a story teller and more the poet in prose, writing a big epic of Yorkshire country life and character which is a distinct entity and which no one else could handle so effectively. That big novel is still to come. Perhaps the achievement of Mr. Cowper Powys in a different field will spur Mr. Fletcher on to his own distinctive achievement.

Another poet turned novelist and apparently content to remain in that successful sphere, Mr. Cecil Roberts, has worked in picturesque experiences and descriptions of his country cottage, his acquaintance with Venice and a vivid journalistic sympathy with Moscow, into a readable, up-to-date story (*Pilgrim Cottage*, Hodder and Stoughton, 7s. 6d.).

John Erskine, the author of *The Private Life of Helen of Troy*, has taken as the theme of his new novel the immortal idyll of Tristan and Isolde. In reading the varying versions of this deathless tale he found that with time the story had changed considerably, the most serious omission being that of the character of Palamede, a Saracen knight, who in more recent versions has been but a minor character. It was this that definitely decided John Erskine to tell the story again, treating it as a modern novel and restoring Palamede to his rightful place.

Dark and handsome, innocent-souled, and instinct with the true spirit of chivalry, pagan though he is, Palamede is a fitting foil to Tristan—for he too loved the fatal and beautiful Isolde. The other protagonists of the old legend are still here—King Mark of Tintagel and Isolde his betrothed, Tristan her lover, and Brangain. The language has the quiet beauty that befits the telling of an ageless love story, but it never descends to sentimentality. In fact, Mr. Erskine has his own brand of light and almost genial cynicism that adds just that necessary tang of sharpness to the sweetness of the story. (The Bodley Head, 7s. 6d.)

Myself and My Friends is an adequate description of Miss Lillah McCarthy's autobiography (Thornton Butterworth, 18s.), but we cannot understand the publishers' claim that " it is the most moving story that has been told in our day." It does reveal, with many vivid touches, the development of the author's character and art. What concerns us chiefly of course is how this talented actress came to be an exponent of verse-speaking, and we are filled with a feeling of frustration to think that that experienced artistry has not been directed to more permanent and co-ordinated purposes. Miss McCarthy apparently exercises so much personal influence that the ideals she set before her at one time might have been effectively realized, but we are afraid that a great opportunity has been allowed to evaporate. Miss McCarthy seems to have been very fortunate in her friends and the support they have accorded her. She frankly relates how, with no particular reason for a return to the stage and no particular play in mind, she induced with ease Sir Ernest Cassel and Sir Alfred Mond to provide five thousand pounds for her to enter into management. Two plays, one by Arnold Bennett and the other by Eden Phillpotts, quickly swallowed up this handsome endowment, but Sir Alfred Mond remained an appreciative friend.

DYNAMICS OF AMERICAN POETRY: XLIV

WITH facile and potent energy a human story moves through the one hundred and twenty-four pages of Robinson Jeffer's last book, *Thurso's Landing and Other Poems* (Liverwright & Co.)

Listen to Percy A. Hutchinson, of the *New York Times*, on the writings: "Indeed, it may be questioned whether there is another poet writing in America to-day—or in England for that matter—who can, when he so desires, write in so indelible a fashion . . . To us it seems that there are in this book pages, many, many pages, which are equalled only by the very great." Mark Van Doren, of *The Nation* adds: " His way is the way of the great tragic poets . . . he dredges, as they dredged, too deep in the mud of mortality not to come up with images and rhythms terrible in their force and beautiful in their explainable strangeness. Hence his uniqueness among American poets, and his very high rank."

The tale is rimmed against the mountains of New Mexico with all the colour and wide reaches of winds and rocks and headlands and all of these we find in the human story that races one on to logical conclusions. The lines run with the ease of a letter to a friend. One is unconscious of them and only the ondriving of the story. A few gathered at random follow:

He passed under a lonely noise in the sky,
And wondered at it, and remembered the great cable
That spanned the gorge from the hill, with a rusted iron skip
Hanging from it like a stuffed black moon; relics,
With other engines on the headland of ancient lime-kilns
High up the canyon.

. . . Her hair blown like a fire through
The level skies; for she had to believe this passion
Not the white heat of nature, but the superstitiously wor-
Shipped spirit of love, that is thought to burn
All its acts righteous.

. . . .

When they were half way down the
Mountain
The whole cloud began to glow with colour like a huge rose,
A forest of transparent pale crimson petals
Blowing all about them; slowly the glory
Fled up the slope and faded in the high air.

. . . .

(Helen speaking) . . . I know
You hate me: let our spites lie, we are both unhappy. Tell
Me something if you know, what's all this trouble—
Some
Affairs of living, and people being troubled and the sun
Rising and setting; what's it all about, what's it for?

I've seen you go on bitterly year after tear, living, planning,
Working: do you know something
That's hidden from the weak like me?

From the latter portion of the book, "Edison" (October, 1931):

A great toy-maker, light-bringer, patient
Finder of powers that were promptly applied to foolish and mean
Purposes; a man full of benevolence,
Eager for knowledge, had dropped his tools and forgotten contrivance.
Why must the careful gifts of good men
Narrow the lives and erode the souls of people, as trader's
Whisky unravels a run of savages?

Apples of Gold is the second book from B. Y. Williams (Mrs.) (George Sulley and Co., New York). The title suggests Vermont orchards in September and the grinding of the cider mill and the fragrance of apples in the air. The poem that gives the title to the book does not tell of the apples I have just been remembering. (Of course, the West is very famous for its apples too.) I give the first stanza:

Oh, restless heart, yearn not unhappily
For magic golden apples that invite
Your fancy, failing all the while to see
The actual things outspread for your delight.

Ending with:

Perhaps when life is spent, when futile seems
The far-flung questing for earth's fabled store,
You'll find the golden apples of your dreams
Were hanging on the tree beside your door.

Mrs. Williams' poems have found favour with composers. Mr. Philip M. Foote is setting to music a group of her poems.

Travellers are incredibly drawn to poems of places they have visited. I have visited the garden of Gethsemane and I am anxious to know what Mrs. Williams relates:

Night in a garden—and the olive trees
Serve only to accentuate the gloom.
Night—bringing no oblivion to appease
An anguished heart where seems no further room
For grief. The unavailing prayer ascends,
"Let this cup pass!" How gaunt the shadows lower!
How grim the silence! Even chosen friends,
Grown weary, fail to watch the little hour!
Is there a purpose in Gethsemane?
Do souls who enter this dark garden learn
Great truths that compensate for agony?

Too frail my faith, and petty, to discern
The perfect pattern; but the utter woe
And loneliness I know—How well I know!

I have in my hand a delightful suède volume of poems by Richard Alexander and Leslie Weaver, edited by R. Sullivan Clift (Botz-Hugh Stephens Press, Jefferson City, Missouri).

The poems in this volume are religious and philosophic and there are nature poems and love poems. Leslie Weaver's group opens the book. The first poem "Captive":

This work is dedicated to our Lord.
The Author takes no credit to himself
Of anything of worth there may be in it.
His spirit—while his body lay asleep—
Was present as transpired these things herein
Described.

Yet you who read what here most reverently
Is written,
Pray take account the while
That mortal effort poorly can suffice
To do fair justice to Immortal theme.

In Lententide, the following picture in the last stanza draws one:

. . . And then as nearer drew that brilliant cloud
I saw the Christ Himself, attended by
Vast myriads of star-crowned souls, whose robes
Seemed wove of sheer spun threads of silver mist,
All intermingled with a thousand hues
No mortal eye had ever seen before.
And flowers bloomed within that radiant cloud,
And fountains bubbled over precious stones,
And birds, whose plumage outshone rarest gems,
Make melodies undreamed by mortal man.
. . . Yet in that splendid garden souls were sad.
For Christ was taking leave of them again.

Richard Alexander's poem, "Death":

What is this life of which we are so fond?
—A bauble prized too highly by us all!
A barren thing we hug that loves us not,
A harlot laughing at our trip and fall,
Nor caring if we flourish fair or rot—
Since her effulsome body be adorned!

Then Death, thou priceless anodyne of care,
Within whose arms forgotten is despair—

O Death, enfold me in thy sweet embrace,
And let me float adown the friendly tide,
That leads thro' ice-hung caverns, dark and cool,
Beneath frost-fretted arches, high and wide,
Unto that rippleless, unruffled Pool—
Wherein, oh, let me enter and abide,
Forever with thee in thy Dwelling Place!

"Rain-Moods" of Alexander's captures the requiem of autumn days in some degree. I give the first verse:

Soft rain in Fall . . . when woods are dying . . .
The sweet and sacred odour of old gardens . . .
Of ferns and box and leaf mould, immortelles . . .
Borne in upon our souls like a benediction
Upon the sighing out of a peaceful life.

There is something quite appealing in the joining together of two writers in one book. I would like to see more of it.

Readers of The Poetry Review stand in no doubt of the high place this reviewer gives Cale Young Rice. In a letter of June 2nd from his home in Louisville, Kentucky, he writes me:

"It is very nice of you to want a word from me about my new book *High Perils* for your review. But if there is anything that should be said about the volume which the poems themselves do not say, I am unable to lay hands on it this hot afternoon. Moreover I am in two minds as to whether talking about one's self is not an art nobody should learn. Some can do it charmingly, but oh the many who can't! Please believe I am glad you like the book and say about it all you can that will conduce to my vanity. Then smile and tell yourself that men are but little boys after all."

From Mr. Rice's "Sketches of Cities," Londoners will want to know what he puts down for their immortal city:

With a shawl of fog thrown over her shoulders
London waits in the rain
For the next bus, the next train from Waterloo,
The next ship from Thames-mouth, the next word
Of an empire falling from her:
Waits like an old woman, poverty-shaken,
Remembering her youth, in the rain.

And New Yorkers will want to read of New York.

A young Amazon
Towering over all cities
With beautiful strength,
Showing herself to ships coming in from the sea.
Half born of America,
Half of alien lands
That fate her to be the harlot of civilization
Or proud mother of new and mighty to-morrows.

A few striking lines follow from " Night Voyage ":

Imagination, the primal aviator,
Voyages ever unstably. Waking at night
And fueled by the quick memories of day,
It takes off with troubled foreboding to round
Our yet uncharted sphere

* * *

Everywhere under the flight the loud surge
Of living and dying comes up, and, pitiably,
The procreative pageant of humanity
Writhing toward no certain goal but death.

Many passionate spirits have come to earth in October, foremost, one thinks of Keats. Read " Hush, October ":

Hush, October, and let me hear the leaves fall.
No other elegy a half so sweet
Is ever said for life, no other pall
Covers, like their, so richly what has been.
The great peace of the year lies over all.

The mellow sun is warm but breathes a lack
Of purpose. The green time of growing is gone.
Fruits of themselves ripen in bushel or sack
Under the trees, or gathered go to market;
And in their stead long-dreamed-of joys come back.

Hush and let the leaves fall down, in the old
Rustling and sighing way of things that pass.
For what does it matter if death be dark and cold,
And all forgetful of all glad delights
If it be peace that passes not away?

Poets are thinking well and writing well to-day in America.

ALICE HUNT BARTLETT.

LISTENING

WHO will turn into my drive from this forsaken night,
Dank with the rolling of mists?
Whose wheels will slither on my gravel,
Whose lights set fire to my window-pane?
Through what lost roads, with no houses and no noises,
But the monotone of the rain beneath the fog,
Is he slipping with my image in his eyes.
Myself in a red dress in the darkness?

MARION CANBY.

ROLLER SKATING CARNIVAL: BELMONT

TO-NIGHT the braziers burn in the quiet cloisters :
Car-lights below and a light from a classroom above
Shine on the playground where the intent skaters
Around uneven asphalt roar and stride,
Past the dark audience and the half-shadowed hornbeam.

Grown men, we know so much !—But yet have not
Fresh carnival faces to fit bright fancy dresses,
Firm hands to strap tight skates or the firm heart
To swing as a spoke of a nimble disciplined star.
Nor do we everyday see those fine unapproachable kingdoms,
Your lakes remote or rhododendroned isles,
Where the blue crocuses grow on the Belmont hill-slope,
The high manhood of the cedar and your good chapel
Whose clean pillars are lit by the white side-windows.

When you have finished singing, we wise (with our bloated faces)
Go out again to the paths that lead downhill from Belmont,
When you have finished singing—to forlorn or futile pathways—
We have no wheels to help our feet.

E. P. B. LINSTEAD.

EVENING

Sweet is the evening light
When soft and grey,
The whole earth gently and indefinitely
Slips away.

Silence the air then holds
As sharp and clear
As flag-leaf standing lone and stiff above
A frozen mere.

This silence visible
Cuts like a knife ;
This sweet grey beauty of the fading earth,
Heard, is life.

E. S. BROUGHTON.

During a recent week-end visit to his native Romagna, Signor Mussolini, moved by the beauty and associations of his surroundings, directed that a " poetry week " be organized annually in the province. By the way of encouragement he has offered a prize for the best work on the three great Italian poets who have immortalized Romagna—Dante, Carducci, and Pascoli. In his own experience the Duce finds the spirit of the Muse a relief from the daily grind of material affairs.

POETRY AND PLAGIARISM

Some Witty Definitions by the President of The Poetry Society.

COMMANDER BELLAIRS in the course of an address to the Kensington Centre of The Poetry Society, said: The great Duke of Wellington was asked how he spoke French. He replied "with courage." If, in some very unorthodox views on plagiarism, I emulate the Duke, I do not speak as President of your Society but as an ordinary student who perhaps avoids climbing Parnassus by looking up with a telescope.

Poetry is written either to please or to influence.

It is an average success to-day in regard to pleasing.

Its success is negligible in regard to influencing.

The question then is who influences the poets?

To my mind the fault lies with the general body of criticism.

Poetry is checked, closured and cast down by the command "*verboten.*" Goldsmith divided ancient learning into three stages—the age of the poets, the age of the philosophers, and finally, the age of the critics when the nation was in decay.

Downfall in culture and civilisation synchronises with a great increase in the activities of the critics.

There is little to be said for criticism unless it is constructive.

As far as excesses are concerned, like what is called free verse, we can set down the sensible view of Blake that the road to excess leads to the Palace of Wisdom.

As for the rest of destructive criticism, one may usefully remember Swedenborg's definition of hell as a place where everybody is trying to make everybody else good. In my opinion the first and greatest critic was Lucifer.

So far as attention is devoted to the private lives of poets it is a case of barking up the wrong tree. The real interest is the poet's mind, not whether Shelley was an immoral fellow but why his mind in some directions was so strangely undeveloped. If the critic persistently discovers drunkenness or immorality in great poets, some of us will begin to attribute the poverty of our muse to being too faithful to our wives or to the absence of alcoholic inspiration.

The Ethiopian dwells on the poet Solomon's love affair with Sheba, but the more sensible Jew tells us of Sheba's endeavours to collect Solomon's wisdom. Let us in all things try to capture as much of Solomon's wisdom and song in the fullest possible extension of Dryden's declaration,

> "I trade with both the living and the dead for the enrichment of our English tongue."

There are three ingredients of poetry—the thought, the words, and the form. Apparently the critics allow us to repeat the thought and the form, but the words that fit them become private property unless they are taken from some communal mine of literature like the Scriptures.

2 7

We tread delicately until in desperation we invent a new way of saying things. We call it free verse. Its votaries can and do plagiarise to any extent without detection by the puzzled critics. If this only teaches us that poetry stands in need of audacity, we can look back on it like a dose of castor oil, nasty to the taste, but beneficial to the system.

What matters in literature is not the extent Shakespeare and the Elizabethans plagiarised from others but how far they enriched us in the process.

If criticism goes a little further, it will be a profitable idea to write a dictionary enabling critics at a moment's notice to crush poets with the so-called deadly parallel, for nothing is really new in this world. If Keats had lived to the age of Wordsworth or Tennyson, heaven knows how much prohibited ground he would have pegged out in the musical conjunctions of words and word images. As for Roy Campbell, he has already exhausted all the imagery of the jungle, and made plagiary of much that pedestrian poets had jotted down in their commonplace books.

The easiest escape from being hunted will be to keep on a minor plane. Suppose the inventor of Sapphics or of blank verse had been able to patent it for all time, where would poetry be to-day?

We do not acknowledge the original pioneer every time we make mention or use of his discovery, nor is an architect hounded by critics because he takes the best he can find in the art of the past. So Keats, familiar with the practice of great poets in the past, familiar with *Paradise Lost*, saw the line, " As one who, long in populous city pent " quite rightly used it for his sonnet commencing " As one who hath been long in city pent."

To achieve the most divine form of expression poetry must be as free as air.

There is the more need for perfect freedom in poetry if the distinction made by Aristotle obtains that poetry is chiefly conversant with general truth, history with particular truth. There may be many ways of describing what Alcibiades did. Macaulay, Guedella, Strachey, Trevelyan, and Winston Churchill would do it in different ways, but general truth is definitely restricted to the way sensible men regard it, and on the other hand to the way Bernard Shaw regards it. The more necessary therefore that when poetry can attain to freedom, it shall absolutely possess it.

If lyrical work must be luminous, must fill the heart of the night with fire, how can we prohibit the use of the same ingredients for the fire as somebody did of old time?

If all the best claims are staked out in poetry it will be overcome by a sort of progressive paralysis. How are we " rich with the spoils of time " if we cannot use our riches?

All progress consists in holding fast to that which is good and trying to improve on it, to the supreme ideal of poetry, philosophy and politics to bring us nearer to God. It is monstrous that in this aim the poet must mind his step lest the dogging critic discovers the leprous germ of plagiarism.

The whole Mount of Helicon should be common property on which no man can stake claims but all are free to transplant to the greater glory of Literature.

Function is the condition of all life. Function goes on wearing down and building up. The land is ploughed, the seed sown, the harvest reaped, stored, transported, baked and eaten and so life is sustained. We are all part of this flux of function, this repetition is as inevitable in poetry as in other things.

I go so far as to say that why America has failed to fulfil every prophecy in regard to producing great literature is that it is hag-ridden by critics and by conscience in literary matters.

Emerson was certain, in 1837, of its great future because " events, actions arise, that must be sung, that will sing themselves." As for Walt Whitman's view that American literature was going to permeate the whole mass of morality and accomplish what churches, schools, and politics had failed to do, one need only cite the relative comment of Mencken, in his *Prejudices* that the literature is " chiefly remarkable, now as always, for its respectable mediocrity. . . . . What one sees is simply a general irresolution, a pervasive superficiality."

Side by side one finds the technique of criticism so highly developed that Americans are swathed in literary codes of what one may not do instead of one supreme law of do anything so long as the result is good. Significantly enough, lawyers are reaping a rich harvest in false charges of literary thefts.

The Americans, as much as ourselves, are the inheritors of the broad, free highways that the Elizabethans drove and as soon as they get rid of these squatter's rights in words that remind one of children fighting over toys, just so soon they will manage to get ahead.

We see science going from triumph to triumph for there are no property rights in what the Newtons, the Keplers and the Faradays may discover. So it will be with poetry when plagiarism ceases to be the monstrous thing that may blast a reputation in the twinkling of a critic's eye.

The whole thing is contrary to the spirit of our scriptural teaching which says to us " here is beauty, take it, spread it, make it your very own." So having chosen words well, they become the source of well-chosen words in others as when Laurence Binyon wrote " For the Fallen " :

> " They shall not grow old, as we that are left grow old,
> Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.
> At the going down of the sun and in the morning
> We shall remember them."

It is the excellent practice of politicians to help out their speeches by the clever things other people have said. Let me give a few instances. Mr. Nevinson in *More Chances, More Changes* in a little hero worship of Keir Hardie, attributes to him the saying that lies go round the world while truth is putting on its boots. Bacon said it, but as the philosopher kept a commonplace book we may be confident that he got it elsewhere. Undoubtedly, Disraeli was too greedy in appropriating the whole of a Frenchman's speech. The American publicist has shown by parallels the " numerous and unescapable " borrowings of Theodore Roosevelt from Nietzsche.

I remember telling a labour leader of the sarcasm that when a certain speaker got up he did not know what he was going to say, when he was up he did not know what he was saying and when he sat down he did not know what he had said. He successfully passed it off the next day as his own in a reference to Mr. Cook, the coal-miner's agent, and its justification lay in the fact that it was the only part of his speech that was reported!

As for the novelists, I remember the late Sir Arthur Pearson telling me how he once received an article proving that Conan Doyle never had an original idea and the sources were given of all his plots. He said the proof was complete but the *Daily Express* never published the article for the simple reason that the public did not care as to where Doyle found his stories so long as he served them up well. As for the playwrights, they are remarkably successful in serving up old dishes. I have even heard the very old tag " gratitude is a lively sense of favours to come " raise a general laugh. When Mr. Milne makes Broxopp say " going there is better than getting there " and praises " a man called Stephenson who invented the first steam engine " as having said " to travel hopefully is a better thing than to arrive," we are delighted for it smiles on the engineer even better than the great writer who penned it. We like it none the less because a dozen writers probably said it before Stephenson. We can reverse it by saying that a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush or that most of the evils of life are due to man's inability to sit still and so on. None are original. There is in truth no originality. I refuse to see other than obvious images in such lines as " I am the Captain of my soul," or

" The land is stained with purple dyes
Of high romantic scenes:
The air is laden with the sighs
Of tragic kings and queens."

Are we to be warned off rose-red cities or anything so expressive as half as old as time because someone once wrote " A rose-red city half as old as Time " ? Were we to be deprived of Rudyard Kipling's

" We have fed our sea for a thousand years
And she calls us still unfed
Though there's never a wave of all her waves
But marks our English dead,"

deprived of this forsooth because Gerald Massey had written

> " We have fed the sea with English souls
> And every mounded wave. . . ." etc. ?

It is no use having this question of plagiary decided by my generation. We have our codes and conventions bred in our bones, our grooves lie heavy on us, but the young can free themselves to follow Shakespeare, Ben Jonson and the best who used any air and sang any air with all knowledge and all language as their province. They made a jest of plagiary, for it only becomes a reproach when you spoil instead of improve. With this freedom you will get a wonderful diversity as all are free to wander among the beautiful combinations of our language.

[This address was first given two years ago, anticipating more recent remarks on and discussion of this vexed subject on which Commander Bellairs expresses brilliant and personal opinions and claims.—*Ed.*]

COMPLACENCY

THE ten-course banquet o'er, they lit cigars ;
Discussed the troubles of the human race ;
Its economic faults, our dwindling trade,
The crisis that the world would have to face.

They sipped their wine, and went on talking loud,
They spoke on banking, ships, the price of wheat,
The problem solved, they donned their hats and coats,
And, satisfied, they swayed into the street.

ALLAN T. BROWN.

WORDS

TALK ! talk ; let the bright mesh
Of words fold us around.
The gossamer, elusive, flippant mesh
Of words and yet more words,
So that the sound
Of our deep thoughts—those darkly flapping birds
That hover all about us—be less strong.
So might a madman smother
Most pitifully, with a crooked song
His madness, though he know not what it is. . . .

Our hearts have lost the touchstone to each other
And I am frightened of your silences.

GWEN LEVY.

A Burton-on-Trent contributor writes : May I congratulate the REVIEW on the unique and finely conceived poem on " Shelley " and also on the most comprehensive and interesting article on our Poet Laureate—that is GOOD criticism because judicious.

THE POETS' FELLOWSHIP:

THE PREMIUM EDITOR'S REPORT

It has been necessary again to divide the award between contributors who have sent strikingly varied work all distinguished for one quality or another.

The awards are to the following :—E. S. Broughton for the lyric " Words " which is moving and sincere as well as accomplished ; G. Levy for a sonnet (not otherwise named) and also for a masterly example of free verse—(Why do writers refrain from finding a title? Do they start without a subject ?)—Zuella Sterling for her short poem " Dead," which is a fine example of the merits of concision and rapidity in verse, as well as being emotionally satisfying ; N. C. Yendell for " Farewell" and a " Sonnet to Dostoieffsky " (" Farewell " seems a successful poem in a metre in which success might be thought difficult) ; N. K. Cruickshank for " Sleepfall " and " Egotism."

We are glad to place on the list of Highly Commended :

Vera Arlett, Worthing ;
Karl van Beek, Montreal ;
Philip Bethell, London, W. ;
I. Sutherland Groom, Bristol ;
A. MacCarthy Hickey, New York;
Phyllis Lubbock, Eastbourne ;
R. McKie, Brighton ;
G. E. Merrick, Warminster ;
I. M. Mills, London, N. ;
E. O. Measor, London, S.W. ;
Iërne Ormsby, Thurgoland ;
S. M. Powell, Salisbury ;
V. Rawnsley, Anacapri ;
Beresford Richards, Alberta ;
D. H. Silver, Bedford ;
E. B. C. Thornett, London, W. ;
Mary A. Woodward, Portland, U.S.A.

The following contributors are Commended :

E. F. Alden, Haddenham ;
Muriel F. Bell, Sevenoaks ;
Herbert Burkitt, London, E. ;
T. E. Casson, Newton-le-Willows;
Evelyn Couchman, Menton ;
Mabel Wing Castle, Los Angeles ;
Mary E. Deeley, London, W. ;
K. Etheridge, Ammanford ;
E. J. Howarth, Liverpool ;
M. A. Holben, Edmonton ;
W. A. Keeling, Hove ;
Edith M. Mann, Dovercourt ;
Doris Major, Hendon ;
Petronella O'Donnell, Clevedon ;
Nancy Pollok, Glasgow ;
John Purdie, Paisley ;
Joyce V. Reed, Wimbledon, S.W. ;
Lucy Simpson, Beccles ;
Bertha Skeat, Sedbergh ;
M. Stewart, Bromley ;
M. K. Toovey, Amersham ;
J. Urquhart, Rochampton, S.W. ;
E. L. Williams, Colwyn Bay ;
Ann G. Williams, Middlesbrough ;
M. E. Milnes-Walker, Malmesbury.

We are happy to publish two more exquisite poems by W. E. Gérin (*née* Bourne) whose " Ode to Eros and Psyche " appeared in our last issue, and whose *Invitation to Parnassus* (Erskine Macdonald, 3s. 6d.) received the warmest praise from all the literary press. We also welcome some new Poetry Reviewers whose excellent work in new verse we are glad to recognize. In this issue we are able to include more representative new poems than usual on the recommendation of our most careful, impartial and considerate New Verse Editor, and in addition to old associates we are particularly pleased to have characteristic poems from our good friend and Vice-President, Mr. Ben Field, the active President of the League of Western Writers (Incorporated) of which our old contributor, Arthur T. Merrill, is Secretary-Treasurer; Mrs. B. Y. Williams, whose new volume happens to be noticed in this issue by our American Editor, and Miss Kathryn Munro of Toronto, while Miss D. E. C. Tomlin proves that poetry can emerge from Wigan.

The meetings of the Poets' Fellowship, which have been greatly appreciated, will be resumed on Saturday, October 7th, at 36 Russell Square, London, W.C.1. Tickets (1s. 6d. each) must be applied for not later than October 5th—a ticket to admit to four meetings, 5s. Subjects for discussion will be found in the following short essays on subjects of particular concern and interest to the Fellowship from distinguished contributors from whom we are always glad to hear and hope to welcome at one or another of the Fellowship Meetings, where they will be able to inspire and maintain appropriate discussions.

Wilfrid Thorley, the distinguished literary journalist and poet, author of *A Bouquet from France*, etc., discusses Rhymed Epigram.

This sort of poetical whimsey has been less in honour with us than with the French in whose literature it appears with a steady persistence, and to a far greater volume of applause than it could ever be accorded in ours. The best of Gallic poets have always been fond of using the sharp point of their epigrams to prick the bubbles of pretension. The lash of satire is, indeed, more readily woven from the threads of a language so deeply rooted in logic and so apt for expressing any sharpness of antithesis. Moreover, this so characteristic quality of the written word is, like all language, no more than a reflection of the national mind that moulded it, and it is therefore the more easily cultivated and the more relished when found.

We of the *Outre-Manche* are, on the whole, a milder-mannered people in our intellectual play, spending perhaps at the nets or behind the scrimmage the harvest of our ill-humour; and if we lack somewhat of those proverbial graces of polite behaviour in which the French excel, we are also less given to the public unbottling of our spleen against those whose character or conduct has excited it to the bursting point. From the earliest pages of Clément Marot to the latest of *Le Rire* it is patent that the French are far otherwise, and their habitual punctiliousness implies as often a tactful pragmatism on guard against an unfortunate encounter as the flowering of an honest good-will into fair words and a respectful bearing. Thinner-skinned than ourselves, they are both more sensible of irony in all human affairs and more sensitive to its shafts when they themselves become its quarry. But with us our very indifference to it causes a deflection; and even when the barb sticks, the marksman is still too often thwarted of his triumph by our failure to wince under the wound. Since, however, it is notorious with the French that *le ridicule tue*, their archers, always able to count on a good " bag," have grown much smarter with the bow.

At the risk of generalizing it may be said that the epigram concerned only with a personal spite and incapable of a general application, requires a capacity of mind no greater than will be the attention awarded to it when the occasion of its making shall have passed from memory. Voltaire's lines on a statue of Love,

> Whoe'er you are, you here your Master see:
> He is, or was, or very soon will be.

slight and casual though they are, can never lose their point, nor fail in that personal challenge to the reader which is the proof of all true satire. But the plea of the epigrammatist for his trade must more generally (if his practice be a proper index) be based on a parody of our Biblical injunction: " If thine enemy smite thee on the right cheek, return him the blow promptly and with double interest." And in so doing the avenger of insult is only too prone to play for those chance points of verbal antithesis which give to the rapier of his wit more flash to dazzle than it has sharpness to wound. Here (in English dress) are Voltaire's lines on his arch-enemy Frèron:

> The other day while in the dale our friend did fare on,
> A hidden serpent chanced to sting poor Johnny Frèron.
> And then what think you followed on this evil spiting?
> The serpent burst in agony and died of biting!

This variant on Goldsmith's fable of the Mad Dog is intended to convey a very contrary moral to that familiar rhyme, but what, indeed, does it prove beyond the venom of Voltaire? And there is this further disadvantage in personal back-handers, that unless the reader knows something of the principles for which their writers stood or the quarrels that divided them, the versicles will for him probably miss the target of their intention.

Literature was very truly a polite accomplishment when the French Academy was founded by Richelieu as a school of manners and the guardian of the traditions of culture as then represented by the dominant caste. Thence comes it that there are neither clowns nor scullions in the French classical drama. But the loss has left us something that we may well admire. Saint-Pavin (despite his qualifying pre-nomen), was a notorious ill-liver; and yet, writing one hundred years earlier than the author of *Candide*, the flavour of his sharp retorts is not spoilt for the palate by the acerbity that taints Voltaire. Of a rival who had reproached him for his niggardly and laborious output, he says:

Tircis makes rhymes as fast as ticking;
  Mine with good cause find slower birth:
For his will die while still he's kicking,
  But mine will live when I'm in earth.

There is nothing personal in that; the lines do not tell us who was addressed or what he wrote, nor is it necessary to know these things in order to see that he has made a very palpable hit. But when Mr. James Stephens, excited to indignant fury by the metrical rag-time of a transpontine poet, speaks of

"policemen's feet that beat in the verse of Ezra Pound"

while incidentally, no doubt, he rejoices the champions of our poetic tradition and offends the growing company of the callower revolters, his lines achieve no more than a comical abuse of something he dislikes, and do not provide us with a stick to castigate pretension in general nor persuade us that here is a proper subject for our belabouring.

A great danger for the epigrammatist is that fluency or the itch to score by a quick counter-blow, may tempt him to means which may later cause his more judicious self to grieve. Tennyson, that great exemplar of Olympian dignity, only once allowed himself to stoop to the retort discourteous, and then followed it by immediate confession of shame on finding himself thereby on a level with the meanness he had set out to reprove—

"the noblest answer unto such,
Is perfect stillness when they brawl."

JULIA BOYNTON GREEN OF LOS ANGELES GIVES SOME VIEWS ON VERSATILITY.

Four or five decades ago two ideas were popularly cherished and were often stoutly defended when occasion arose, especially among the shrewd, practical labouring or trading folk as distinguished from the scholars, the intellectual class. The first of these notions was that a genius is very close to being a fool; that Nature could not, with due economy and fair play to all concerned, give so much in one direction without scrimping in others. Prudent fathers discouraged attentions to their daughters from youths gifted in an artistic, musical or literary way, seeing no substantial livelihood ahead for a possible family and suspecting lack of balance and stability in the suitor.

That there was a measure of truth in these generalizations must be conceded. However, surveying rapidly our own experience among women and men, I think we will acknowledge that as a rule where a person can do one thing well he can usually do two, probably more. For those very qualities that, while they do not constitute genius itself, go to assist genius and make it effective, are found to be serviceable along many other lines besides the one in which genius is most manifest.

Of these qualities a close and minute observation, a patient attention to detail, a regard for finish, an insatiable passion for perfection, a capacity for sustained and often exhausting labour of brain or hand—all these may be mentioned as contributing to the success of any undertaking, and as sure to be present in the temperamental equipment of the genius.

A case often cited, years ago, in proof of this alleged one-sidedness of the highly endowed was that of Blind Tom. The present writer was far too young at the time of this popular musician's concert tours in America to form any idea of his real status as a performer on the piano. One is inclined to think that he was not to be classed with Paderewski or Hoffman! But that he had facility and a decided power of impressing great audiences is sure, as well as his mental deficiency in all other directions except that of tone and harmony. Probably other and more striking instances of this idea might be produced, but a longer and more discriminating study of the subject would, this writer is convinced, establish the fact that a high order of power in one direction is usually based on a general elevation of intellect.

It is quite true that often with great gifts co-exists a strange inertia, erratic methods of procedure, indolent lapses, indifference to important things and flat refusal to be externally coerced. The thoroughbred racer is not the plough horse. Individuality raised to the *n*th power which is genius, is not to be held down to all the small conventionalities. The stress and strain of creative periods must be relieved and balanced by intervals of mental repose approaching vacuity or even coma. In short, genius must be allowed to function in its own way, and very proud and happy should this old world be to possess genius at any price.

The second idea mentioned at the beginning as current some years ago is still voiced now and then in the old trenchant phrase, " Jack of all trades and master of none." That is the world's rough comment on the rare, the charming, the enviable characteristic of versatility. And the commonplace prosaic world knows as little, really, of the rapt absorption, the peculiar rewards, the indifference to popular estimates of the genius-fool as it does of the temptations of the Jack-of-all-trades, beckoned enticingly down half-a-dozen beautiful paths in any one of which he sees waiting rich experience, success, happiness.

Martin B. Anderson, a former President of Rochester University, used to dismiss each graduating class with this wise injunction, " Know something about everything and everything about something." In other words, " *Be* a Jack of all trades, but *master* of one."

Versatility is defined as the power of turning with ease from one thing to another; readily applying oneself to a new task or to various subjects. There can be few pleasures in life equal to that felt in this power of turning readily to a new task, in full consciousness of ability to perform it worthily. The peculiar joy and exhilaration attendant upon the discovery and development of a hitherto unemployed faculty resembles the elation of a prospector in opening up a rich mine, with this difference, that the resources of the human mind and spirit possess always a value and interest paramount to that attaching to any material acquisition.

We hear much nowadays about over-activity, the necessity of leisure, and are rhythmically enjoined " not to be doing, but to be." No doubt this is a timely word; but to the healthy nature activity is a joy, and the power of effectual exertion along various lines brings into life a richness unsuspected by the man who spent his whole term of years in study of the dative case, and on his deathbed lamented that he had not concentrated on one form of the dative case. Moreover the mental wear and tear of the specialist must be far greater and more rapid than that of the worker who shifts from one exercise to another quite different. The adage, " a change is as good as a rest " puts this in a nutshell. The mental refreshment of the writer, for instance, who goes back to his desk after an hour's drawing or piano practice must contribute not only to his personal longevity but to that of his work, for the jaded brain driven continuously along an unvaried course can hardly fail to betray its weariness in the product.

But this is undeniably the day of the specialist; versatility is discouraged and suspected. Very likely there were in Wilson's time sundry good practical people who thought a book-writing President was not attending strictly to business; and even so broadminded and sympathetic a soul as Elizabeth Barrett Browning had the air of persuading and reassuring herself when she wrote cheerfully and approvingly of Robert's spending long days over his modelling, just for practice, breaking up the results as they were finished. But just this sincere active interest in, and capacity for, both the arts of design and of music have made possible for us such poems as *Abt Vogler* and *Andrea del Sarto*, even though " one life " allowed Browning the *perfected* accomplishment of " verse alone." He says it will be remembered:

> I shall never paint you pictures, carve you statues,
> Make you music that shall all express me.

But at times, one imagines, he must have been sorely tempted, gifted in these other ways as he undoubtedly was, to try his fortune with bow or brush, and risk affronting the " lonely muse."

It is believed judging from Keats' fine record as a medical student that he would have made an excellent physician had he not followed the greater inclination. This combination of poet and physician with the added gift of the essayist and storyteller, had a brilliant example in Oliver Wendell Holmes.

The career of William Morris is full of interest as exemplifying the union of the ideal and the practical. Many, perhaps, who have never read, nor heard of, the *Earthly Paradise*, have admired the poet's wallpapers and approved his model factory and his humane relations with his workmen.

William de Morgan was another example of multiple accomplishments; and in his *The Mind in the Making*, J. H. Robinson tells us, "Galileo had artistic ability and might have turned out to be a musician or painter."

The outstanding instance of versatility is, of course, Leonardo da Vinci; his diversity of gifts has been the wonder of the ages. He was painter, architect, sculptor, scientist, engineer, mechanician and musician. And Michelangelo was painter, sculptor, architect and poet.

To return to Browning—his versatility is treated by Chesterton in two or three pages of his daring, forceful English in what must seem to many rather too flippant a manner. His referring to Browning's deep and serious interest in music, painting, and sculpture as little "ingenuities" and "fads of the hour" is much too light a fashion of dismissing the matter. If the poet, as Chesterton affirms, practised these arts "without any hope of ever doing them well" it was because he had no hope that the dominant passion, poetry, would ever relinquish or abate its superior claim, and not because he distrusted his ability.

It is perhaps idle to wish or imagine any difference in the course of Browning's life and effort as it passed into history; but it is not too much to believe that had any chance wrested his phenomenal intellectual energy from its chosen work, its current turned into these other waiting channels must have overcome all obstacles and borne as rich argosies of another sort as those we enjoy to-day of his purveying.

EUNICE QUIMBY, NEW HAMPSHIRE, U.S.A., DEFINES THE POETIC FEELING OF JESUS.

"To shun all sin; the fulfilment of virtue;
The purification of thought: this is the law of the
Enlightened!"

So teaches the Buddha, and in similar verse forms are gathered tenets of other early religions. Judaism is no exception. From the lament of Lamech to the Psalmist who prays:

"Search me, O God, and know my heart:
Try me, and know my thoughts;
And see if there be any wicked way in me,
And lead me in the way everlasting,"

are versed wisdom, experience, exhortation, aspiration, grief, faith, confidence and encouragement.

But the teachings of Christianity are recorded in prose forms. The only verse forms in our New Testament are quotations from the Old.

The Greek Testament, however, in addition, writes in verse the Lord's Prayer as recorded in Matthew, and the song of the children in the market-place :

"We piped unto you, and ye did not dance;
We wailed, and ye did not weep."

Subsequently, however, Christian hymnology supplemented the New Testament, bringing immeasurable enrichment, comfort and encouragement.

Before the art of printing, verse forms for explicit tenets were effective in oral instruction and memorization. Christianity, being a religion of spirit and underlying principles rather than explicit commands, required rhythm less than earlier religions.

While the religion of Jesus emphasized reason and a perfect life above irrational emotion, yet some degree of poetic feeling is bound to precede, permeate and follow great conceptions. Reading the life and words of Jesus discloses the appreciation of nature, the readiness of metaphor, the emotions of the heart, and the insight of faith, which are the marks of a poet.

Deeper than Byron's appreciation of the " deep and dark blue ocean, the music of the roaring sea, the glorious mirror, the image of eternity," lies the power to calm " the raging of the water." Beyond Coleridge's conception of the invisible God in the presence of the " bald awful head of sovran Blanc," lies the insight to find on mountain heights also a loving Father, and to commune with Him.

The interest and sympathy of Jesus noted not only majestic eagles but harmless doves ; tiny sparrows were within the Father's care. Goats and lost sheep, foxes and ravening wolves, camels and hungry dogs, fish and trampling swine, wise serpents, hens and chickens, teach those hearers who, having ears, hear.

Grapes and figs, thorns and thistles, tares and mustard, mint and rue, trembling reeds and fair lilies, all help to translate his truths.

Goodly pearls, whited sepulchres, new birth, salt and light, keys and purses, mother and brethren, sleep and blindness, wine and blood, doors and strait gates, rock and sand foundations, ploughs and easy yokes, bread and water of life, fire and burning lamps, the cross and the Father's hand, cloth patches and skin bottles, blind guides and the good shepherd, are metaphors of vital truths.

The different results of the spring seed-sowing : the stray bird-feeding seeds, the wilted withering shoots, the struggling weed-choked plants, and the cultivated field, picture to him the varied effects of his words on his hearers.

The thick growth of fruitless fig foliage symbolized a selfish hypocrite ; the shaking reed was a spineless coward ; the lovely lilies, tokens of God's love of beauty and care of the helpless ; the quick-growing mustard seed and the white harvest, similes of the coming kingdom of heaven, of which He is the way, the truth, and the life.

The broad and deep emotional soul of Jesus found expression in his sympathy with the feelings of others, and compassion for their suffering; in love of friends and children; in indignation against wrong deeds and attitudes; in his dependence upon prayer; his absorption in his mission; his own need of sympathy; his distress at his sacrifice; care for his mother; and his abiding peace and joy.

The last and most valuable quality of the true poet, faith, which leads to insight and prophecy, Jesus possessed most highly. The ground of his faith was confidence in a loving heavenly Father, who, because He clothed the grass of the field, would surely do no less for his human children. Prayer to this Father would bring wondrous results if faith were strong.

The truths which Jesus saw by the keen insight which was the result of faith He taught his disciples and the multitude.

> If you fathers give good things to your children, will God do less for us his children?
>
> Be not indifferent to little ones, because the angels in heaven care for them.
>
> Things impossible with men are possible with God.
>
> Healing depends not so much on my power as upon the faith of the sufferer. Power would be unlimited if faith were perfect.
>
> God is a spirit; and they that worship him must worship in spirit and in truth.
>
> In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so I would have told you; I go to prepare a place for you.
>
> I have many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now.

His power of insight was unique. He could read men's thoughts, and did not always trust himself to them, " because He knew what was in man."

He was in such touch with the spiritual world as to be conscious of an angel strengthening him. On the mount of transfiguration He could see Moses and Elijah and talk with them.

His insight penetrated not only present conditions, but reached to the future. He knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who it was that should betray him. He warned Peter of his coming denial, and prepared the disciples for excommunication and death.

All lovers of beauty, therefore, as well as of goodness and truth; all who possess poetical qualities—deep appreciation of nature, aptness of metaphor, strong heart emotions, and keen insight of faith, may feel in Jesus sympathy and reinforcement as they try to voice beauty of form, feeling or spirit.

ALAN HADFIELD (KNARESBOROUGH) ON THE COMPOSITION OF VERSE: The making of poetry and song is as the weaving of garlands of beauteous words, ordered in " a delightful proportion " so that smooth be the flow of them and easy to be spoken; sounding sonorous or sweet upon the ear.

Remember Sir Philip Sidney: "I never yet heard that old song of Percy and Douglas But I found not my heart moved more than with a trumpet!" So finely woven are the words of poetry from out the joys and deeps of thought and feeling about the splendour and the beauty of life and living.

WHAT IS POETRY?

(*To the Editor of* THE POETRY REVIEW.)

SIR,—May I add a note to U. M. D. Orange's article "On Defining Poetry"? It is clear, from the diversity of the definitions, that "poetry" has not the same meaning for everybody, even in the same period; but we must not overlook the fact that words themselves have different meanings for different people. Each of us supplies, according to his own taste and personal requirements, the imperfections and deficiencies of language, and nowhere does this cause more confusion than in argument and definition. Thus, you may hear people disputing a question on which they are fundamentally agreed, though they cannot be reconciled verbally. The differences of opinion on what is poetry are therefore, I think, more apparent than real.

Assuming that poetry is a unity, by which I mean that all kinds of poetry have a basic element which is "poetry," an element which we know well enough when we meet, even though we cannot define it, it is easy enough to apply it as a test to decide what is and what is not poetry. We know its effect to be emotional: therefore we can rule out what has no emotional effect upon us. But is it purely emotional? I believe that it has a purely emotional origin, but that the intellect fertilizes and sublimates it, and that the marriage of thought and emotion, when perfectly consummated, presents us with what we call poetry. As for the thing itself, can we say more than that it is a blend of sound and sense, the former in this case sublimating the latter, so that what would otherwise crawl upon its belly is given wings? We cannot have poetry *without* sense; but all the sense in the world will not make poetry unless we have the sound.—Yours faithfully,

Salisbury, July 7th. S. W. POWELL.

THE TREND OF MODERN POETRY.

(*To the Editor of* THE POETRY REVIEW.)

One is rather sceptical of the phrase "the trend of modern poetry," and yet, in reading the last few numbers of THE POETRY REVIEW I have been impressed with a strange resemblance between some of the poems which come from the distinctly "individual" poets. There appears to be a subtle liaison in the minds of these more original workers, of which I think they must be quite unconscious. I think they are growing more mystical, realizing that "In death is life, in sorrow, joy." To take instances from the last two numbers only—in " Shelley's Birthday," by John Bunker, the writer says, of " a myriad woes " of the poet,

" Oh, 'tis a rich doom,
A dower of pain immortally reserved
For man's great lovers."

A few pages later appears the fine poem " The Martyr," in which are these words :

" Now my fear to exaltation
Changes, to a great elation !
There shall be no recantation,"

expressing the triumph of spiritual joy over the suffering of the flesh.

Then there is the deep insight of the lovely " Crucifix " by K. V. Chevis, and again a deep insight in the widely contrasting poem, " Umbrella Men with Bowler Hats," by P. Bethell, who sees right through the exterior trimming of modern life to the sources of human influence.

C. Desmond Greaves, in " Peredur's Tree," expresses my theme succinctly, when he writes :

" When man has solved the maze
In which he wanders, he may find a way
To *flames like roses*, and to flowers like day,"

and E. M. Sadler, in " Sadness in Spring," confesses :

" How, deep in Beauty's heart, lies hidden pain."'

The lovely " Guest " of Beresford Richards, makes of Death a tender and friendly visitor. I could quote other poems in earlier numbers which carry out the same idea, which suggest that " the trend of modern poetry " is to transform pain into joy and death into life.—

Yours faithfully,

Bristol, July 18th. J. SUTHERLAND GROOM.

[We have noted from time to time the tendency of poems received by THE POETRY REVIEW to express a common trend or feeling irrespective of any editorial direction or preference. We may claim that for many years THE POETRY REVIEW has indicated and illustrated " the trend of modern poetry."—ED.]

From time to time we have discussed in THE POETRY REVIEW, the poetry of science and the great field open to the man of science with a gift of versification and ability to reconcile science with art and to transfuse scientific fact with beauty. Mr. Kenneth Knight Hallowes has devoted himself to this great vocation and in laying the foundation stone of a new school of poetry, in addition to an erudite apology for his experiments, has provided us with a series of poems demonstrating *The Poetry of Geology* (Murby, 6s.). The sonnets in particular are vivid and concentrated, impressed by the grandeur and significance of geological records from the fossil cell to the Himalayan heights.

A CHRISTMAS HYMN

(*To Anthony Shearman.*)

1. *Man speaks :*

MAN, insupportable and shy,
Lonely till Silence shall die,
Loneliest of them that cry,
Am I.
The Sun dies, and the ice-bound Universe,
Aloof from praise or curse,
Rejoices in its strength,
Rejoices :
It has reached the top, eternal cold,
Where no loves or lies are told,
Staring above, staring beneath,
With white eyes and bleaker breath,
Circuiting, measuring all along the even length
Of its own tired, frozen voices.

God, uncontrolled, am I,
For in these seas of icy sky
I am the Lord of deep and high,
Eternity. . . .
The god dies, and the helmless world of things,
Where far the prophet sings,
Trembles, uncharted, wild,
Uncharted :
It has known the governed poise of life,
And whirls into the laugh of strife,
Wherein it totters and recedes,
And with every motion bleeds,
Till from all living peace it is exiled,
Like a song of love departed.

Love, that as a chord must die,
Instants of infinity,
That with the worm must after lie,
Am I. . . .
This love dies in the cold, and the bare cold,
Wherein she could not mould

Her cataleptic lips
To life :
Thus Love, struck by the Winter, has gone by
From the tent of her first misery
Into the void, the arcless void
Unperfected though undestroyed,
The Hell of Nothingness, where pass no bannered ships,—
Aloof at length from rest or strife.

Man, unascending, broken, shy,
Loneliest of them that cry,
Am I.

2. *God speaks :*

God, who am All and High,
Fire-ministered with purity,
Purest and only Spirit of the sky,
Am I.
The Sun dies, and the ice-bound Universe,
Ignoble, struck with curse,
Dies, totters, trembles, fades,
Trembles out :
Yet I have felt its body's cold,
Centuries deep, pine-forests old,
And come to save it, with a child's breath,
For I have Form, and power o'er death,
As when I and Man built Heaven with our rude spades,
And the first-born angelic stars were seen to shout.

Love, that like music cannot die,
For a chained futurity
Echoes from its briefest sigh,
This am I. . . .
All Love save love in Me would perish deep
In the bare cold of dull and tragic sleep,—
My love rejoices in strength,
Rejoices :
I have reached the top, immortal peak
Where mountains are no longer bleak,

Staring around, staring below
At Man's self-misstructed woe,
Saving all, measuring all by the untired length
Of My own thoughts and voices.

Man, many-voiced in cry,
Much-hued with destiny,
Stone of mortality,
Man am I. . . .
Man dies, yet man in Me is wondrous clear
Of spirit and doth appear
Shining in breath and law,
Shining :
I have assumed all dark and dull fears,
All silences, all waves of all tears :
Staring into My Heaven above,
Where the primal splendours move ;
And rest, My godhead guarded by a bed of straw,
'Neath a Maiden's eyes reclining.

O ! Beauty-marvellous Babe, Thou that art I,
My Son, Myself, robed in simplicity,
How bitterly in the forethreatening years
Wilt Thou storm the house of tears !
Thou soon shalt know the ice-bound world
And rocks against the thunder hurled,
And the bare cold :
Yet these but for brief space of hours,
Lapsed minutes from Thy full-creating sight,
For Thou within Thy Mother's arms
Shalt break bleak Nature and her ice-charms,
Thou, frail-handed, shalt build towers
Of light, of light.

3. *Man speaks.*

MAN, insupportable and shy,
Lonely till Silence shall die,
Loneliest of them that cry,

Am I;
Yet through my eyes I see
A blazing century,
An end to cold
Come upon the winter cold.
See! I touch Thy fire,
And am burnt by the fire;
Look! I hear Thy voice,
And sing with that voice,
Feel! kiss Thy tender head,
Thou in Thy poor suffering bed
Slumberest on:
Rest Thee, my Baby Lord, Thy Mother's Son.

TERENCE WHITE.

LAMENT

GONE! Th' image treasured in my heart so long,
Vanished as a dream, a mirage,
When the evening sun goes down.

Gone! Ah, gone! . . . the cherished idol
From its shrine, by life's rude forces
From my temple torn.

And I, forlorn, can turn no more
Towards that hallowed thing my heart hath known,
But face (as they from Eden, by the angel thrown),
Towards the world, bereft,
With memory alone, . . .
Aye, memory alone, . . .
Till life's long journey's done.

. . . . .

Yet, even so, at times, the mirage, wraith-like
In its beauty, floats across the mind,
While I, enrapt, before the vision fleeting,
Enter Heav'n, forgetful of reality,
Oblivious that my treasure's gone.

VIOLET RAWNSLEY.

Anacapri.

ALL SAINTS

THEY went thro' fire and water
But they came to a wealthy place:
They were driven as sheep to the slaughter
Goaded to mend their pace,
But they came at last with laughter
And sheaves to the Lord of Grace.

And their backs bore the marks of the ploughers
Who made the furrows long,
They had watered their seed with showers,—
Tears for each cruel wrong,
But they came to the Lord of the Flowers
To all His wealth of song.

Death's waves and storms went over
As they crossed the troublesome seas
But they came to a Land of Clover
And spices borne on the breeze
For the Wind of God is a Rover
Blowing as He shall please.

They sowed in tears and sorrow
But they reap the goodly grain
For them the glad to-morrow
After a night of pain
And the song that they sing they borrow
From the Love that knows no stain.

MARGUERITE POLLARD.

TRUE

THERE is no use in going over the old ground,
No use in uttering a single sound
Of protest, a cry or a sob—
It will only rob
You of victories of calm.
For an old wound there is no balm
Like sleep. Turn over on your pillow—
To-morrow you shall see the sunlight through the willow.

MARION CANBY.

THE WHITE CAT

COME! polar cat.
Why do you stalk away?
Disdainfully across the lawn,
Padding the bending grass
With gentle feline feet.
Why restless in pursuit of this or that?
Some modest butterfly
That wobbles by,
Made glaring in the sun's subtropic ray.
To you that wander by the moon
Is not day-sleeping sweet?
Why let the slumbering moment heedless pass?
Another hour, another noon,
What are they worth against the night?
For you have borrowed beauties from the moon—
Your coat immaculately white,
As silver as her light,
And as thin cloud which glides across her sphere
Your paws are grey.
Come! Lie voluptuously spread
Under my chair,
Where I can stroke your head
And feel your silken hair.
Leave off this giddy wild career,
And sleep. For they must sleep by day
That purpose to enjoy the night. E. O. MEASOR.

EGOTISM

LONGER, far longer than
A mother's care for her child,
A miser's greed of his pelf,
God's love for man,
Man's love for himself.

I know that if at the last my Lord should say to me
Depart from Me O you that never knew Me,
To the uttermost ends, to the outermost darkness depart!
I would plead with Him, I would cry
Ah, Lord, in the dense defeat, in the darkest night
It was I, it was I! N. K. CRUICKSHANK.

FAREWELL

I MUST say good-bye to the moon,
Ah, woe is me!
The high stars cluster and dance,
Heavenborn to heavenborn glance;
But, woe is me!
I must say good-bye to the moon.

I sold my heart for a song,
Ah, woe is me!
For the song is a cry of pain,
A sob, and the lone road again,
And, woe is me!
I sold my heart for this song.

I gave my life for a dream,
Ah, woe is me!
There is never a night but is dead,
Nor a day but is mockingly fled,
Ah, woe is me!
Who gave my life for a dream.

I wagered my soul for the truth,
Woe, woe is me!
There's no truth but desire that burns on,
So I lost, and the high stake is gone.
Woe, woe is me!
I wagered my soul for the truth.

There is still the curve of the sea;
Then, God, speak now.
Though my heart cries on ruins of youth,
And my soul chokes in grey mists of truth,
Dear God, speak now:
There is love in eternity?

I have said good-bye to the moon,
Ah, woe is mine!
The high stars cluster and dance,
Heavenborn to heavenborn glance;

But woe is mine,
And good-bye—good-bye to the moon.

N. C. YENDELL.

FLANDERS

I SEE the ghosts that lurch across the mud,
The slowly moving shades of murky night,
Who wander wearily through fields of blood
And ghastly woods towards the garish light
Of hopeless dawn. The phantoms sob for breath,
They stumble beside craters logged with rain,
By mangled men across a greasy plain,
And nightmare horses smelling still of Death.
The deathly flares reveal the smoking sky
And tortured trees raise broken arms on high,
And bloody shapes have fallen on the heath,
The Realm of Desolation, Pain and Death.

MARY HOBSON.

FADING LABURNUM

WHILE the street groaned unheard,
Prostrate in the afternoon
Of latter May, and dusty church bells
Called indolently to evensong,
You shone upon the writhing pavement :
You did not flinch at the thrust of the sun
Which stabbed all things through the heart,
But hung unmoved ; you took the glint,
A pyramid of burnished gold.

No longer are you dropping-wells of fire :
Idle June dissolves in dust and brings
Decay and change—ashes fall lightly
Over the grey wall into the black gutters.

Next month you will be forgotten,
And the velvet musk-rose take your place.

But you will bloom next year.

R. G. SAWYER.

ON POETRY

APPARENTLY there exists in many minds a mistaken impression as to what constitutes poetry. They are obsessed with the idea that the "thought" in it is its chief claim to distinction. This is far from the truth. Great poetry, that is, the poetry of a born poet—not a mere cultivated mind with a desire to write poetry—is a simple and sincere expression of the emotions. And whether these emotions are linked in the poet's mind to half-forgotten memories, or to the very present beauty in nature, or to future hopes and fears is immaterial. Such are but the means with which the poet conveys the emotions that secretly stirred him at the time. Poetry is, to quote John Stuart Mill,

> "feeling confessing itself to itself, in moments of solitude, and embodying itself in symbols which are the nearest possible representations of the feeling in the exact shape in which it exists in the poet's mind."

If we are honest with ourselves, we know that this must be so, for nothing can move us so much as the emotions; they are the very breath and essence of our personalities. The intellect, upon which an exaggerated value has been placed by man, is a check on the emotions, a balance, a half sister to Reason, the very antithesis of Art. But because man is ever striving to acquire knowledge, in the mistaken belief that his feelings and attitudes spring from knowledge, he has placed upon it an importance it does not possess, as far as understanding of life goes. And somehow, this thirst for knowledge, for intellectual enlightenment, has crept also into art, with which it has no active or important concern.

In science it is all important, but science is directly opposed to art, for "science," to quote so excellent an authority as Mr. I. A. Richards,

> "which is simply our most elaborate way of pointing to things systematically, tells us and can tell us nothing about the nature of things in any ultimate sense. It can never answer any question of the form. What is so and so? It can only tell us how so and so behaves. . . . Nor, indeed, can more than this be done. Those ancient, deeply troubling formulations that begin with 'What' and 'Why' prove, when we examine them, to be not questions at all, but requests—for

emotional satisfaction. They indicate our desire, not for knowledge, but for assurance, a point which appears clearly when we look into the 'How' of questions and requests, of knowledge and desire."

Many persons are almost ashamed of the emotions. This feeling probably arises from the fact that the emotions have often been over-indulged, with disastrous results. And yet would you condemn all things good and beautiful because at times they are abused?

If we look back upon the most beautiful and unforgettable moments of our lives we shall find, usually, that they are purely emotional. And yet you may say, when Marconi discovered wireless, surely that was the most wonderful moment of his life! This may be true, but it was not the knowledge itself which produced the excitement, but the emotional joy in the fruition of his labours.

The capacity for strong feeling is also the root from which all motives spring, motives which induce human beings towards the pursuit of truth, and when once this pursuit has started an ardent nature is certain to pursue it, for energy of character is invariably the accompaniment of strong feeling.

Of course, strong emotions require a strong intellect to balance them, and if for some reason, such as a bad education, the intellect is not properly cultivated, the strongest emotional natures often come to grief, and therefore produce the most lamentable results.

Love, whether parental, paternal, or of the kind which accompanies courtship, is one of the most common and yet beautiful and moving emotions. Yet in the latter form (the most intense) it is made light of and a subject for amusement. The reason is that it is too familiar to excite interest in the so-called "intellectual" engrossed in his search for a great new truth, and the scientist would barely recognize its existence. Yet would you say that an ancient beech was not beautiful because in a high wind it may crash to the ground? And is a silver birch none the less lovely though it stands among ten thousand in a large wood?

This lack of appreciation of the familiar is one of the commonest failings in human nature. It means so often that a great but familiar truth as to the meaning of life is passed over in the search for a new truth that will startle the world. Such a truth (as apart from a discovery) will never be found. All that is important is here about us, in the ways of growing grass, of flowers, in the habits of trees, in the behaviour of humanity. But still the search for truth goes on, the philosopher exploring in one direction and the scientist in another, while the simple labourer of the field who holds communion with Nature alone, is often nearer to the true meaning of life than either.

Poetry, therefore, is mainly emotional. The importance of the intellectual stream, in any active way, is a fallacy. The emotional experience creates the impulse to write and is the active force throughout. Mr. Richards in his *Science and Poetry*, has said exactly what I wish to convey :

> " The minor branch we may call the intellectual stream ; the other, which we may call the active or emotional stream, is made up of the play of our interests. The intellectual stream is fairly easy to follow ; it follows itself, so to speak ; *but it is the less important of the two* " (the italics are mine). " In poetry it matters only *as a means* ; it directs and excites the active stream. . . . Some people who read verse (they do not often read much of it) are so constituted that very little more happens than this intellectual stream of thoughts. It is perhaps superfluous to point out that they miss the real poem. . . . To exaggerate this part of the experience and give it too much importance on its own account, is a notable current tendency, and for many people explains why they do not read poetry. The active branch is what really matters, for from it all the energy of the whole agitation comes."

Therefore, poetry cannot be written by cunning and study, or by a mere scholar actuated by a desire to write poetry for its own sake. A poet is born, not made. He writes because he is unable to refrain from writing. A true poet would write if not a soul in the world cared for his poetry, and if he never sold a verse in his life. But if his poetry should happen to please other people, so much the better.

All conscious art or the desire to please must in itself and its results be bad. Poetry is spontaneous, although it may be the result of much labour. That is to say that its original urge is spontaneous, or emotional, though whether it involves labour or not depends upon the particular sympathy between the emotions and the power of expression at the time. A poem which has involved great stress and labour may be just as perfect as one in which the words came pouring forth and took only ten minutes to write. The latter happened to be written when the mind, in its constructional capacity, was in perfect tune with the emotions. Needless to say, such moments are rare, but that they do occur is undeniable.

A great deal of poetry and possibly all great poetry is conceived and even executed by the sub-conscious mind. It is not uncommon for a poet to write a poem one day, and on re-reading it a few days later, to find that he cannot recognize a word of it as his own. And yet the same poet will instantly recognize a poem written by a contemporary, at a second reading, after a lapse of time. Perhaps when our psychologists have explored a little further, we may have more light on this subject.

BEATRICE EVE.

THESE BLUE-VEINED HANDS

THESE blue-veined hands run ice ; these baffled eyes
Are starveling wrens that in their gaol of snow
Peck at a frozen world. Unlovely lies
Her skin's infertile field, her craggy brow.
The world has naught to make her blood peer out ;
Muted, entranced in alabaster chill,
She does not listen when the spring-time's shout
Strides to green laughter on the wintered hill.

Yet, yet upon a shivering mid of dark
I've seen her waver, pause upon the stair,
Fling up her head ; then, vibrant, seem to hark
On some rich sound too lovely for my ear ;
And in the instant hush I thought to trace
A crystal noon of April on her face.

WADE OLIVER.

FOOTPAD

SLEEK and smooth
And black and fat
Stealthily prowls
The farmyard cat,
Over the farmyard
On to the wall
Creeps very slowly
Then—not at all.

Pounce!
Squawks and feathers fluttering,
And then—
Nothing else that stirs
The slumberings of men.

Under the gnarled firs
From starry space
A round moon blinks.
Only a black cat purrs
A feline grace;
A black cat winks! ALAN HADFIELD.

THE UNFINISHED SYMPHONY

(*Schubert.*)

THE brooding silence bears a rising song,
As dawns the western wind on seas becalmed;
And through the fading sunset breaks a long
Clear call that mourns the day, so soon embalmed.
The spreading night moves up the waiting sky,
And from the infinite an anthem peals,
That tells a soul's despair lest love should die,
But triumphs in the hope the moon reveals.
The peace of God is shrined within this work,
With all the wonder that the mind may hold;
" Unfinished "—not because of hands that shirk,
Nor yet because the singer's heart grows cold:
But, having spent the sum of beauty given,
He waits to seek the finished theme in heaven.

IËRNE ORMSBY.

DEAD

THEY have killed her with words, not swords ;
She is dead.
They have taken the wine from the gourds,
And left them empty instead.

The flowers and gala festoon
Are scattered afar ;
They have stolen the sun and the moon
And trampled the star.

They have killed her with words, not swords ;
She is dead.
They have built her a casket of boards
And set a stone at her head.

ZUELLA STERLING.

WORDS

WHENE'ER I long a lovely thought to find,
And fashion beauteous poems as is meet
For dearest love, my cunning lags behind

My will, and rudely shattered at my feet
Like broken vessel lie my sky-born dreams.
And all the happy melodies and sweet

That throng my fancy, quaint exotic gleams
From some immortal world whose beauty hides
Within your eyes, fade, and the present seems

But as a whisper which in strangeness glides
Across a deep, untroubled, silent sea—
The whisper gone, nought but the silence bides.

When shall my soul, untrammelled, joyous, free,
Within this silence strange have faith to know
That one weak word may hold Eternity ?

E. S. BROUGHTON.

Attention is drawn to the statement regarding the Hallam Memorial Window Fund on page 481.

NOT FOR POSTERITY

A Young Poet Reveals Himself

AT writing, a bare week has passed since I set myself to destroy almost all of my creative work ranging over a period of nine years. I remember the pile of manuscript, ream upon ream, representing a novel, several short stories, a book-length narrative poem, a juvenile romance, a number of poetic dramas, some fragmentary attempts and short lyrics that could only be counted in hundreds. In a brief two hours I had ripped every bit of paper into four pieces.

My father, who has devoted a life-time to singing "at the point of a pistol," was gratified that at my birth I showed no signs of artistic temperament. At five, however, I decided that I had inherited the noblest calling. Laboriously I set myself to write some short stories—fantastic episodes in which the hero was concerned with voyages to the moon and the ultimate fate of the solar star. My greatest difficulty was in learning how to spell; for every word that was not spelled "t-h-e" or "a-n" had to be looked up. The result was, once I had learned a word, I used it over and over, so that my writing assumed paragraphically the aspect of the recurring seasons. These stories, I remember, were inscribed on sheets of yellow copy paper carefully sewed through the centre and folded over to make a book. This might have gone on indefinitely, had not my nurse refused to act in the capacity of an all-round reference tome and insisted that I consult a dictionary for my needs, which hurried me to the conclusion that the nobility of my calling was not worth the labour. I think my father breathed a sigh of relief.

Two years later, while on a vacation in the mountains, I was laid up with la grippe; and one day, for lack of something better to do, I wrote two short poems. The first, if my memory holds, ran like this:

> "Columbus sailed over the ocean,
> Columbus sailed over the sea.
> And he discovered America,
> The land of the brave and the free."

But even this did not seriously alarm my father. It remained for Eros, a few years after, to turn the trick. At school I fell madly in love with a precociously pretty girl in the graduating class. She was four years my senior, and her name was Helen, which gave me an opportunity, during the arithmetic lesson, to liken her beauty to that of her Trojan namesake (I had been absorbing Bulfinch, Homer and Euripides). When I showed the verses to her, she asked me if I wouldn't like to write them into her autograph album.

Wouldn't I ! I decided then and there that I was a poet. It was the first time I had ever succeeded in making any impression on the opposite sex. I went home and, in a warm glow of pride, composed a stately ode to Prometheus. This was followed shortly by a lyric to Athene and another to Apollo.

Then I discovered Dante. I dreamed that I, myself, was the Florentine poet, climbing through Purgatory with Virgil and finally getting my foot into Paradise, where I saw the golden Beatrice approaching me on a chariot drawn by two griffins. I wrote a long, rhymed narrative in the first person, in which the poet, seeking the ideal land, is told by a golden-haired lady that he must first ascend the Seven Steps of Life. The steps represent the various qualities of Truth, Beauty, Virtue, and so on ; their way is long and perilous. Ambition is to be his guide on the journey. After climbing two steps, however, I realized that I was not experienced enough to describe the loftier ones, and that the poem might never be finished. I solved the problem by having the hero gaze into a crystal mirror which reflected his future life in its broad outlines. After battling to the top and fighting his way through the gates into the ideal land, he is again greeted by the golden-haired lady, now Beatrice, and taken forever into that Utopian realm.

My father was aghast. But when the first shock had worn off, he accepted the outburst with fatalistic sagacity. Since both his sons had determined to follow in his own path, he left no stone unturned to set us on the right track.

The results, on my part, were four Greek tragedies, a veritable barrage of short poems, and a volume of *Lyrics to the Olympian Deities* with prose notes describing the function and relative meaning of each god. This last I showed to two publishers, neither of whom saw in it any commercial value enough to warrant its publication, though they both agreed that it "showed talent." Taking matters into my own hands, I raised enough subscriptions among my friends to have the book printed.

Nothing can adequately describe my horror when it finally came off the press (and, at the last minute, I rubber-stamped a belated copyright notice into it). Here, in these clumsy, misspelled, ridiculously amateurish verses, were my innermost confessions, emotions and passions. The idea of two or three hundred people reading them and snickering behind my back kept me in a constant state of tension. Had I been somewhat less scrupulous, I would surely have burned the whole set, despite the subscriptions. Only I felt honour-bound to keep my contract; and, with great misgivings, I mailed the copies out. The ointment poured over the fly, however, was the encouragement and praise tendered by those I most respected. Walter Yust, in the *New York Evening Post Literary Review*, wrote:

> "The verses are vigorous and show an articulate enthusiasm nothing short of amazing in one so young. . . .
>
> "Twelve years old, hearties, and his longest in the collection, 'Muses,' is sustained singing that beggars lungs. . . . We like the last paragraph in his preface:
>
> > "'This book is intended only for those who can appreciate and understand the nature of it, and therefore I have not bothered to make it attractive to the public'."

But I was no prodigy. If the book contains anything, it is only the seed of a growth I have not yet attained. I have the deepest admiration for those children who, at the age of nine or ten, can blossom into a delicate and amazing perfection. But I have seen them pass quickly into oblivion, like fragile flowers cowed by the first frost. For the artist who would attain the stature of a tree, youth, indeed, all of life, is a struggle and apprenticeship before achieving a final expression. The closing line of *Faust*, which in a few words present a deathless image and a philosophy of life, could not have been written by a young person.

In all of my earliest works that I may well call " inspired " —despite current deprecatory associations with that word—I invariably bit off much more than I could chew. At my father's advice, I set myself to the arduous grind of sharpening my teeth on the old touchstones. I deliberately experimented with difficult forms ; I made free use of a dictionary, a thesaurus and a rhyming dictionary ; I studied word values, line values, the effects of contrast and similarity, the rich vowel sounds of Keats and the mechanical perfection of Poe. With the chisel of industry I carved away at the vessel of form in order that, when I knew inspiration arrived, I should have a worthy receptacle for it At first I achieved nothing more than poor imitations of past masters, and, later, rather good imitations. But I found that when a moment of inspiration came, I would completely forget all this technique which was alien to me, and my work would have much of the same clumsiness that marked my earliest attempts. It is only of late, after a struggle with form through long, slow years, that I feel I have found anything which approaches my needs.

By lucky chance, I came across an article in a writer's magazine that described a form as yet little known or recognized—analysed rhyme. The rhyme scheme is secured by combining the vowel sound of one word with the consonant sound of the other to find the third line ending, and reversing the process for the fourth line ending. Thus, the words, " vale," " stream," " feel " and " name " would form the rhyme words of a stanza. The " l " of " vale " is combined with the long " e " of " stream " to get " feel." Likewise, the " a " of " vale " is combined with the " m " of " stream " to get " name." The effect is based rather on a contrast than a likeness of sound, and seems to offer a pleasing difference from the usual rhymes. Despite the rigid restrictions imposed by this form, a great variety can be found with a little experimenting. The following, from a poem which appeared in the *New York Times*, illustrates a triple rhyme ending.

> "Welcome, Valhalla, the valiant Valkyrie Maid,
> Bringing these warriors doomed by the Oracle,
> Death, the Unwavering ; now by a miracle
> Here to be born again, gods in the glory made ! "

A six line stanza can be produced thus :

> "With pale stars moving
> In silent haste
> Amid the waving
> Floods of the East,
> Night's breast is heaving
> As Dawn is loosed."

I have also found the sonnet with three stanzas of analysed rhyme and a final rhymed couplet to be effective. The following poem, also from the *New York Times*, will give an idea of how this may be employed.

> "METAMORPHOSIS
>
> "I am a lover of things that change :
> The miraculous evolution of dust ;
> The gods dethroned and the gods replaced ;
> The diver poised for the salty plunge.
>
> Not for long can I live on a hill ;
> For the sea, that varies with each new dawn,
> Shall fashion songs till it sucks me in.
> But the call of a hill is a changeless call.
>
> Oh, tear the gate from its rotted hinge !
> Burst the bars of the musty cage !
> Cross the water and burn the bridge !
> I am a lover of things that change.
>
> And shall *I* be changed on the Ultimate Day
> To become a lover of things that stay ? "

The last couplet here gains in emphasis by the sudden transition into conventional rhyme.

I have been working in this form for the past year ; and now it seems almost a second nature with me to write in it. My last inspired theme fitted automatically into the mould ; a sequence of sonnets in analysed rhyme, it is the first piece in which I have been able to synthesize form and content to any degree.

One thing that amuses me is the set of rules laid out by authorities for ideal working conditions. The poet must have isolation, peace of mind, a calm outlook. My first volume, I remember, was written in snatches with a flashlight in bed, between classes at school, on the tops of buses, whenever and wherever the thoughts came to me. And my best work was written in the most opposite of ideal conditions. I had passed through an emotional strain that left me with a bad cold and a high fever. It was a warm week in the Fall, and the sounds of radio music, singing, a saxophone and a banjo drifted through my open window. A group of unexpected guests dropped in while I was in the midst of it, without in the least disturbing the flow. I felt completely isolated in a cloud of fever through which only one thing, the necessity of setting down my lines, loomed clear. I dashed them off without having the slightest notion of whether they were sublime or ridiculous. I forgot the technique entirely before the rush of images. It was only later, when I tried to revise the poem, that I discovered it was my most technically perfect piece ; I was able to change no more than a word or two of it.

Yes, I would like that villa on a lonely stretch of sands, with " magic casements opening on the foam." Only I fear that the very perfection of it would throw me into a state of passive ecstasy. Emotional stress, tension, " the worry and the fever and the fret " seem to provide the most fertile soil for creation. Perhaps Art is, in some respects, a reaction, an answer to Life. When Life presents A, the artist recoils, goes into himself, finds something new and returns crying, " No, not alone A ! I have found B. B is what is necessary to the age ! " Thus Whitman, recoiling from the American prudishness of his day, discovered for the world a new freedom, an honest outlook on life.

Having just emerged from my 'teens a short time ago, it interested me to empty out my files and go over all I had done for the past nine years. My work fell clearly into two divisions. There were those poems that were formed well, but were hollow for lack of a message or depth of emotion ; and there were those in which the emotion or inspiration was apparent, but so crudely shaped as to be ineffective. Where there was technique, there was no depth ; and where the latter was present, it was shapeless.

It struck me suddenly that none of these poems were of any value, except inasmuch as I had written them and thereby gained in experience. If I should abruptly cease to be, I reflected, I would leave behind me so much chaff that the literary investigator would probably not have the patience to discover the one grain of wheat.

This one grain of wheat is the above-mentioned sonnet sequence in analysed rhyme. It is the only thing I have done in which the inspiration is well enough shaped to reach any goal of clarity. At least it seems that way to me in my present stage of development. At a future date I may look back to it with the wise and slightly contemptuous smile of mature years. But for the present, my faith is staunch in that one poem. I have set myself a standard by it.

For the rest, I concluded, neither the world nor my reputation would lose anything by their non-existence. The idea of some future biographer (pardon the blushes) digging out these early works and presenting them to the public would be nothing short of horrifying. So many poets leave so much too much behind them. If Keats had left us only three or four of his very best poems, he would remain just as much an immortal, and our respect for him would be increased by the wonder of " how he got that way," since there would be no means of tracing his development through a volume of amateurish attempts. I made up my mind at once to safeguard myself against the future by immediately destroying all my works except the one piece that satisfied me. I like to think that I have written but one poem in my life, and that I am not ashamed of showing it to the world.

I had a ripping orgy. The process of destruction seemed, indeed, too painless. A month's work could be completely annihilated in three or four tearings. I reflected, then, the results were nothing, but the cause was everything.

The cause could not be destroyed. What I will do in the future will be better because of what I have done, though the latter is of no value in itself. But I have served only nine years; and the usual course is from twenty-five to thirty years. Much that I will do yet must be worthless of necessity, but it will be a continual preparation against such a time as I may have something to say. Given about two more decades, perhaps I may be able to show results that will count.

In the meantime, I believe it is well to place the horse before the cart—for the horse's name is Pegasus.

GARRETT OPPENHEIM.

TO MILTON

(*On his sonnet to his blindness.*)

ALABASTER was my body, swathed in death's fair white,
Which now to blackest earth must reconciled be,
As with a chanted service, this a solemn rite,
The shell of what had served me here was gently dropped
Into a crypt—perhaps to be remembered not.

And of what use was I in this eternity
Of suns and planets, royal in their rich estate?
A singer of one song—on human destiny—
And that—ah me!—futile, melancholy note
Which sightless eyes have given to my poet's throat.

And when my mind became an eye which scanned the light
Of heaven, searching ever for a way of hope,
An angel led the gropings of my darkened sight,
Revealing there that greater world of light within
Whose cities shine with gold such as I might win.

Would that my plaintive song might live within some heart
Which grieves for treasure it may ask but never own,
And that its wistful note might heal the aching smart
Of some brave brother who Gethsemane has known,
That it may comfort him when he must walk—alone.

THERESA SMITH ROBB.

THE PEOPLE OF THE MARKET-PLACE

WE made, upon a summer noon,
A merry festival,
Whereto all men might freely come
At pipe and tabor's call.
But the People of the Market-place,
They paid no heed at all!

We led a gay procession forth
In costumes rare and fine,
And summoned all with trump and drum
To join the stately line.
But the People of the Market-place
Sat still and made no sign.

We gaily planned a gladsome rout
Of frolic pageantry
To lilt of harp and violin,
And coloured imagery.
But the People of the Market-place
Would neither hear nor see.

We go our way, and sing our songs,
And dance, in spite of care,
To sound of viol, lute, and shawm
Through seasons dull and fair.
And the People of the Market-place,
They still are glooming there!

G. E. MERRICK.

INTERLUDE

SO quiet it is, the tremor of my sigh
Is loud above the breeze that passes by;
Clear on the pond's cool cheek and pallid edge,
Are mirrored the hawthorn clump and rushy sedge,
Above the stillness of late afternoon
Hangs, knife-fine, a slender crescent moon.

The mist with subtle fingers weaves a crown
Over the sloping fields, brushwood and down,
A poplar-tree tilts with a spearlike head,
At the darkling blue of heaven, a golden thread

Of sunset dies, that once was sea of fire,
Submerging the ivied church and rounded spire.

I take the fickle path skirting the hill,
And reach the stones which pave the water-mill ;
Silent it stands, the giant wheel asleep,
The only movement is the spin and leap
Of gnats gyrating in a whirligig,
And the sudden snapping of a splintered twig.

The youngest child has left the village street,
And now the silence breaks, when slower feet
Of countrymen tread heavy from their work ;
Soon on the hedgerow, purple shadows lurk
Of night, . . . again the tremor of my sigh
Is loud above the breeze that passes by.

PHYLLIS M. LUBBOCK.

TO ROBERT POLLOK

(*Author of* " *The course of Time.*")

WIND stirs among the heather and a strand
Of broken cloud drifts to the sunset gate—
Do you recall to-day in the unknown land,
The rugged moors, the mountains desolate,
Where an ideal lived of love and truth
That was the lodestar of your earnest youth ?

I think this eve, as the blue twilight falls,
To Moorhouse* shall a wistful memory come
From your brave soul, that found those ancient walls
In the brief years a refuge and a home ;
Or, climbing Ballagiach's haunted height,
Your ghostly feet shall know an old delight.

You shall not be forgotten ! Brighter fame
Than yours adorns the history of song,
But time can never wholly quench the flame
Of a great purpose lit by God.—The strong
Moor shall endure and steadfast stand the hill,
And Scotland to your name be faithful still.

NANCY POLLOK.

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* The Renfrewshire farm where the poet was born in 1798.

WINTER'S RAINS

WINTER'S rains enveloped with
Mist the woods.
Furrows of rich red loam
Became as rippling streams.
From the boughs o'erhead
Millions of tiny raindrops hung,
Each rounded globule
Glistening.
There was a rustle as I heard the wood-elves.
Raindrops, each reflecting the sun
Chattered.
There was a whispering,
When the sun appeared,
The raindrops vanished,
Their work was done,
In the glory of the sun
Their course was run. LILAIN MANNING.

WHO LOVED THE EARTH

THE hearts of all who loved the earth
Have made its pleasant places.
No beauty ever came to birth
But love unlocked its graces.
A haggard place this earth would be
Without its mortal lovers
Who made for every eye to see
What only love uncovers.
They stamped their passion on the hills,
And the hills wear it evermore.
They poured their praise till now it fills
Even the rocks on the salt shore.
And where they loved their spirits keep :
Ghosts too glad to fall asleep.
The pleasant places breathe an essence
The richer for that lurking presence.
So may I too on earth remain
When earth shall know me never again.

S. W. POWELL.

A CRITIC TO KEATS

On the sale of one of his Autographed Poems.

TO-DAY we turned your pain to merchandise,
And sold the ghosts of dreams our fathers slew ;
For Failure now has donned another guise,
And in the shape of Fame pays court to you.
No more with savage barbs the critics come
To tear your Beauty as a bleeding flower—
Since all would hear the voice that Death makes dumb,
And all would serve, because Death has no power.

But were your tragedy as yet unplayed,
And Genius, Love, Disease, like fever'd fires,
Beckoning from your tortured youth for aid
To us who blame the harshness of our sires—
We too would give you gall where balm could save,
And fling you broken to a hero's grave.

MELFIN W. JONES.

TO AUDREY GETTING UP

WALK about, Audrey. Let me see
How maidens walked in Arcady,
Ere fashions laws and folly's fancies,
Crippled grace with straddled stances,
When life was young and woman's limbs
Swung to the freedom of the winds.

You are not one of those who tread
With shambling gait on feet of lead ;
Who strut or stagger, plunge or plod,
Tenacious creatures of the sod.
Yours is the cadence of a song
In action, as you move along.

A song in action. You must be
Life's fundamental poetry ;
Lines of beauty set to measure,
Rhythmic joys for eye to treasure.
A poem walks, with silvery tread,
When Audrey rises from her bed.

W. T. CRANFIELD.

KEATS AT HAMPSTEAD

OF the twenty-five troubled years of his life on earth, John Keats spent only two at Wentworth Place, Hampstead; yet this house is richer in memories and associations than any other house the poet inhabited.

Pleasantly situated in a quiet road whose name has now been altered to Keats Grove (it was formerly John Street), Wentworth Place is open to the public on Mondays, Wednesdays and Saturdays, thanks to the fund raised some years ago in which The Poetry Society was the chief English subscriber. Many pilgrims have stood, thoughtful and deeply moved, in the little back room on the ground floor where Keats wrote *Hyperion*, *La Belle Dame sans Merci*, *Ode to a Grecian Urn*, and other immortal poems. In the hall outside this room (which Keats called his study) a loudly-ticking clock records the passing of each moment. One longs to be able to put back those relentless hands—"back, ever back" until the year is no longer 1933 but 1819, and the little room is no longer woefully deserted but gloriously filled by the actual human presence of the poet.

One hundred and thirteen years ago, in September 1820, Keats left Hampstead and England for ever. But surely something of him, some undying spiritual fragrance, lingers still in that study at Wentworth Place? There are the old yellowish-brown cupboards, on either side of the fireplace, where he kept his books and all his treasures; there are the French windows opening out into the garden, with two low cane-seated chairs placed almost at right angles as they are in Severn's famous portrait. Here Keats often sat, with his left arm resting on the back of the second chair; reading, or meditating, or looking out at the trees and shrubs—an ideal environment for the conception and birth of Poetry. The incomparable *Ode to a Nightingale* is believed to have been written after breakfast under the old mulberry tree on the lawn, whose gnarled and spreading branches still bear fruit in early autumn.

To think of Keats in that fertile and fruitful spring of 1819, "dashing off" masterpieces in the heat of his overwhelming genius, and then to think of him a year later, ill and embittered, in the clutches of consumption, tortured by his frustrated love for Fanny Brawne—it is piteous enough in cold print, but a hundred times more so when one enters the very room where he lay day after day on a made-up sofa bed, his only amusement watching the people of Hampstead pass by on the other side of the garden hedge. Yet he wrote with brave humour to his sister Fanny :

> " How much more comfortable than a dull room upstairs where one gets tired of the pattern of the bed-curtains. Besides, I see all that passes—for instance, this morning if I had been in my own room I should not have seen the coals brought in. On Sunday afternoon between the hours of twelve and one, I descried a pot-boy. I conjectured it might be the one o'clock beer. Old women with bobbins and red cloaks and unpresuming bonnets I see creeping about the Heath. . . . I mustn't forget the two old maiden ladies who have a lap-dog between them that they are very anxious about. It is a corpulent little beast whom it is necessary to coax along with an ivory-tipped cane."

In this front room, which Keats shared with his friend Charles Armitage Brown as their common sitting-room, there still hang the original set of prints of Hogarth's *Rake's Progress*, and seventy-eight Hogarth heads, in an old gilt frame. These are etched in Indian ink, and were copied by Brown from the prints for his own amusement, while he sat with the invalid Keats.

In this room, too, Keats wrote some of his most passionate letters to Fanny Brawne, and they were either passed to her out of the window or handed in—doubtless by Brown—at the Brawne front door. It was not until comparatively recently that the dividing wall was knocked down and the two houses became one.

Fanny frequently visited Keats during his illness, and she continued to wear his engagement ring for many years after his death; but whether she was spiritually worthy of him is matter for endless controversy. One cannot forget that she once spoke of him lightly as " that foolish young poet who was in love with me."

The saddest room at Wentworth Place is Keats' bedroom upstairs, where he coughed blood for the first time, and " gazed steadily for some moments at the ruddy stain on the counterpane. Then, looking in his friend's (Brown's) face with an expression of sudden calmness never to be forgotten, he said, " I know the colour of that blood—it is arterial blood—I cannot be deceived in that colour ; that drop is my death-warrant. I must die."

The echo of that tragic night in 1820 still haunts the bare white room, with its old-fashioned " basket " fire-grate and window opening only at the bottom. On the narrow wooden mantelpiece rests a large oval wreath of myrtle leaves from the grave of Keats, sent by the Custodian of the Protestant Cemetery at Rome. Beside the wreath, a large photograph of his tombstone shows the exact words of the inscription :

This Grave
contains all that was Mortal
of a
Young English Poet
Who
on his Death Bed
in the Bitterness of his Heart
at the Malicious Power
of his Enemies
Desired
Words to be engraved on his Tomb Stone
Here lies one whose name was writ in water.

The ignorant little men who sneered at " Johnny Keats" in *The Quarterly Review*—how humbly they would have grovelled could they have foreseen their victim's posthumous fame ! Among his contemporaries, only Shelley discovered the truth about Keats in his lifetime ; *Adonais* is a more fitting monument than any wreath or tombstone :

" He has outsoared the shadow of our night ;
Envy and calumny and hate and pain,
And that unrest which men miscall delight,
Can touch him not and torture not again ;
From the contagion of the world's slow stain
He is secure. . . . "

MARY MAIR.

Copies of books (other than American) reviewed in THE POETRY REVIEW *may be seen at The Poetry Society offices but they are not for sale. Readers, however, may have copies obtained for them by sending the published price plus postage. Overseas readers for whom any new books will be obtained as a special service, may open a deposit account.*

CHRISTINA ROSSETTI

(*Born Dec.* 5, 1830, *died Dec.* 29, 1895)

SHE knew the Dayspring, golden-fair, would garnish
the mind that dwelt apart ;
and feared earth's glittering bauble stones might tarnish
the jewel in her heart,

So, though she loved the cowslips of gold weather,
the hyacinthine floor,
she sought the *nightshade* bloom, and purple heather,
of an empurpled moor.

And as the climbing road wound steep and steeper,
and the cold light grew dim,
she grasped the fingers of her sweet soul's Keeper,
and drew more close to Him. . . .

Yet for Italian vines, when grapes encumber,
her heart yearned, and her mouth ;
though few her sojournings and scant her slumber
in plains of the " sweet south."

She, when from Roman warmth and light asunder,
sang like a blinded bird,
from promised heavens she snatched her pearl-dewed plunder,
and wrapped it in a word.

Though her own heart was flung from Beauty's Giver,
luminous-born and gay,
she gleaned no joy-drunk blossoms by the river,
but stole the flowerless way.

EPILOGUE :

" *Nightshade*," said I ? but *nightshade* led to morning,
rose, ribbing the wide blue,
Below :—the world, her memory adorning :
Above:—a *heavenly* view !

I. SUTHERLAND GROOM.

ON THE DEATH OF RUPERT BROOKE

THERE lies a silent grave in Skyros, mid
The white and pinkish marble of the isle,
Where poppies and the wild thyme bloom and bid
The sunlight gently linger low and smile;
Blue waters wash the pleasant shore the while.
Well might the grass be green there, for beneath
That turf a young lute-player, past the guile
Of human suffering, is one with death:
That is his resting place—O let this be a wreath!

The soul of him who rests there never will
Be silent; even to-day it roams again
The English countryside by waters still
Or seeks the quiet of a Cambridge glen;
Or in the company of Englishmen
It joins old jovial laughter with good friends;
Or else it wanders in the woodland when
The moon comes up and a loved maiden bends
Steps thither; or it journeys to the earth's far ends.

Could such a soul stoop down to silence? Nay.
What pity tongues must taste mortality!
He made the breeze speak language—he must stay
Somewhere to listen, loving, breathlessly.
The cold and quiet moon with melody
Grew warm because he sang: somewhere he waits
Its rising. Never doubt he wanders free,
Responsive to each old love which elates
Him now as then. And never think he hesitates

To kiss fair lips again, or press soft hands,
Or in a dazzling company drink tea
At five. He sleeps out now in distant lands
Beneath his moon—that corner now must be
As loved by England as her own countree.
Somewhere he sits with his dear second-best
Of loves, forgetting past love-agony.
Perhaps he strolls the stars at whim's behest,
And sheds strange happy tears, as fancy bids him quest.

"*And young men shall see visions.*" His he saw,
And gave himself to that high vision's spirit.
His dream of liberty compelled his awe,
And with the fire which Englishmen inherit
He rose and strove to realize, or near it,
The dream's fulfilment. Martyr, as I write
The battle yet is breathless : shall your merit,
Who saw the way so clearly, rose to fight
So soon, be all in vain, O Freedom's satellite ?

ROBIN LAMPSON.

Written in California in 1917, *when the author was* 17 *years old.*

OLD ESSEX DOOR

THE casual glance on me
Apathetically
As deer at the moon's round ring.
But, though an humble thing
What honour I have known !
To how much wisdom grown !
What happiness I've seen !
In what dire moods I've been !

I know sharp stabs of rain
And foraging and strain
Of winds ! But in each bout
I shouldered the invader out !
Long winters now I know
The caressing feel of snow
And never would I miss
Young Day's awakening kiss.

How gaily while I swung
With Life ! . . . But thrice Death hung
His drear, desolate wreath . . .
And Birth ! . . . What narrow things
Doors are, that a Soul's wings
Must fold to stoop beneath !

AGNES MacCARTHY HICKEY.

SONG TO DELILAH

YOU took my eyes, and still unsatisfied,
Honour you took and, after honour, fame.
Sincerity and peace you stole away,
The straight calm glance of friendship, sympathy,
And gave the sweet false coinage of your lips
In payment for the treason I had wrought
To all that men hold golden in their minds.
And I, like Judas, but without the shame
That in the end redeemed him from the last
And most unworthy infamy of all,
Took avaricious guerdon and could not
Fling the base metal to the cloaking soil.

You took my eyes, and now, when all the world
Is desolate and all the music still,
When all the magic days are lost in dusk,
And gazing inward, all that I can see
Are dark infinities without a star,
Still I remember, as I always must,
That while you played the traitress, yet you were
A lamp to all the beauty that is life.
Still I remember, as I always shall,
How all the colours of the earth and sky
Glowed the more richly suddenly, and how
Music gained magic, how material things,
Forest and mountain, river, field and sea
Found a new loveliness and gave to life
Significance and sent my happy heart
Singing its folly to the laughing stars.
So, though I sit alone in this grey street
Amid the ruined houses that once held
For me the warmth of friendship and of love,
Still you are with me like a magic tune
Echoing in my heart and mind always.

This you can never rob me of, and so
Little it means that you had nought to give
But mockery, no greater purpose than
To gain a quarry in a careless chase.

3 0

It was not you but what I made of you
That counted. This high alchemy was mine.
So, even though you had been nothing more
Than a poor wanton queen of easy hearts
You lit a flame that lit for me the world.

Let the rest pass, for all that now is left
With honour gone and courage lost, are these
Remembered visions which were born of you.
And since, though all unknowingly, you gave
These dreams to me, how other can I do
But sit alone in this dark peace of mine,
Listening for one last echo of the song,
The siren song that lost for me the world,
Listening—and with sightless eyes agaze,
Searching the darkness for your vanished star.

VICTOR ALLAN.

THE GARDEN

THE pear-tree and the apple take
Hues white and red, for Jesus' sake,
Who rose, as fair as Adonis rose,
Amid the Syrian orchard's snows.

Weep not Adonis, who is dead,
Ye Syrian women, nor his red
Blossoms of resurrection praise !
Christ fills the lilies with His rays.

EDMUND CASSON.

"I RODE ALONG"

I RODE along in vacancy
Of mind. Moonlight poured over me
And over night-stretched fields as I
Rode on silently.

Riding in hopeless apathy
Of mind, I heard each hedgeside tree
Moan gently, bowing from the wind.
I too bowed—silently.

N. L. BRIGHT.

APPROXIMATE RHYMES

"Rhyme has been happily defined as a memory and a hope."—G. C. Ashton Johnson.

THERE is probably not the least doubt that, whatever transient changes affect one supreme expression of the human spirit, poetry, the feature of rhyme will never be wholly abandoned, so deeply enmeshed in the stuff of our being is the strange relish for a periodic recurrence of similar sounds. Scorn this relish as puerile, brand it as foolish, shallow, unworthy adult notice, unfit to survive, a relic of savagery, yet it goes serenely on.

Is not rhyme one manifestation of the universal phenomenon—rhythm, occurring as it usually does on a beat of the measure and so reinforcing the stress? In fact there are vague analogies along this line with other arts. For instance, there was a good old rule of architecture, a hoary canon supposably still in force, that ornamentation must be carried along definite structural lines, not applied just anyhow and anywhere. The actual frame is to receive due recognition and honour. The pleasing results of this precept in execution testify to its wisdom.

Referring this idea to the case of poetry, what do we find? Structurally poetry is a sequence of short members proceeding usually after a predetermined pattern and involving both metre and rhyme. Now rhyme, coming at the ends of the structural lines, gives a satisfaction allied to that afforded by the capitals repeated on a row of columns, or the carved tips of a succession of rafters projecting from the eaves.

Something like this—a subtle correspondence—appears to run through all worth-while art expression, and the concept is not too fanciful. How we welcome each return of the main theme, or a charming phrase, as it is woven through the intricate elaboration of a symphony! How Nature understands developing a colour scheme, reiterating one or two hues just often enough and in just the right places to bind all into exquisite harmony! Study a pheasant's plumage—the wings of the first butterfly you encounter in your walk; pluck a violet and mark the touch of white at centre of the flower and the orange stamens; then marvel at the taste that stains the extreme base of the stem, where it joins the plant, with the exact purple of the petals, a delicate echo, a rhyme, a perfection of finish, that leaves us wordless. Furthermore where, as in the macaw and other tropic birds, the vivid colours are unrelated, unbound by a unifying shade, the eye is vaguely offended—we term the effect bizarre, grotesque, barbaric.

The introduction of the same colour at various carefully selected points is a characteristic, also, of good design in costume and interior decoration.

Well now—dear critics, insurgents, *vers librists*—have we made out our case? Have we lifted a feather's weight of opprobrium from this trivial trick of rhyme? Have we advanced anything to render this aural titillation less a thing to apologize for? Have we succeeded in linking it up with important and significant urges of the spirit—urges that are not to be overlooked or despised or suppressed? I hope so.

Assuming, then, a measure of tolerance for rhyme, the question follows, must the rhyme sounds be absolutely identical except for the differentiating initial letter? as *air* and *fair*, *metal* and *petal*? Some authorities demand this degree of precision; others allow more liberty, or at least condone it in the work of masters, naming the departures "modified," or "partial," rhymes. Such would support Le Gallienne when he rhymes a word given above, *air*, with *myrrh*; and Miss Millay when she mates the other word, *metal*, with *little*; though I doubt whether they would endorse the former poet's *chalice* and *callus*, or applaud Miss Millay when she, believe it or not, gives us *only* and *homely*. E. A. Robinson goes her one better—or worse—in his *repose* and *clothes*! This is too much, and sets us moralizing over the fallibility of even the virtuosi.

The present writer after much meditation and study finds a cheerful willingness not only to look with indulgence on rhymes that are not perfectly complete, but to strongly favour them here and there, as varying the possible monotony and making for added interest and a fuller music. We seem not made for too much regularity, for continuous and unvaried perfection; in many, perhaps all, art products presented to the appraisal of the human intelligence, occasional deviation from the general uniformity and correctness of line, colour, surface or sound, is far more pleasing than unbroken sameness. Too great smoothness bores us. Clement Wood says of Emily Dickinson, "Half or more of her closing sounds are near-rhymes, assonances. So distrustful was she of stock poeticisms that she fled from the tinkle of an accurate rhyme."

The lover's criticism of Maud in Tennyson's poem—"Faultily faultless, icily regular . . . Dead perfection," is more than a passionate outburst, it is a brilliantly shrewd pronouncement in the field of aesthetics. Perfection has a fatal lack—the element of life. It is interesting to follow the notion through the other arts, and the crafts. In it is contained the whole of the vogue for hand-woven fabrics, the small irregularities in mesh and thread create what is in effect little sub-patterns that render the texture more attractive than where every inch is the exact counterpart of every other.

We have gained much of late in appreciation of mural beauty. The delicate play of colour over many stretches of wall and roof is attributable to the use of brick or tile or shingles of varying shades of the dominant ochre or umber or red, the blend producing a chromatic depth and richness that makes the old monotone very cold and dull. Inside the house "hard finish," or "Alpine," used to be the acme of our desires in the crude eighties and nineties, and truly it did call up visions of the Jungfrau or the Simplon in the dead of winter, being one smooth, glassy, uncompromising dazzle of snowy white. The alternative was wallpaper, and to this resorted those who were visited by some glimmerings of aesthetic enlightenment. How infinitely more agreeable to-day are our walls, cleverly roughened and stained, to temper the light and catch areas of restful shadow.

As to music, some of the most delicious moments it gives us is when a voice or an instrument hangs just short of the impending note. This sweet torment is almost exactly that of the approximate rhyme. To be sure the transient dissonance is soon resolved into the expected harmony; but in the poem this happy conclusion is matched by the arrival of the next perfect rhyme, and the aural demand is fulfilled.

Not so long ago students of music wrestling with the mysteries of the diatonic scale and inquiring desperately, " But *why* must there be a half tone between the third and fourth and the seventh and eighth ? " were told briefly, " Because the ear demands it." Well—now venturesome folk have defied this autocratic demand of the ear, and the heavens have not descended upon us in awful wrath. Debussy uses a " tonic " scale—*all* whole tones, and if you want anything more beautiful than his " Clair de Lune " you'll have to lure some celestial harpist off his pink cloud ! So—maybe that demanding ear will after a while cease to require chiming end words in its poetry; but there seems little prospect of it at present; though free verse still flourishes to some extent the world has swung back pretty loyally to the traditional forms.

It is plain that, with rhymed verse, in the judging just what approximate sounds are allowable and what must be rejected lies the gift, the instinct, of the real poet, for of course this idea—the charm of imperfection—must not be pushed too far. Now and then a major craftsman will transgress so flagrantly that the merest poetaster or child would notice and object. One of the most unforgivable instances of this is at the close of George Woodberry's splendid sonnet " At Gibraltar " (the first of the two):

> " Last night Trafalgar awed me, and to-day
> Gibraltar wakened; hark, thy evening gun
> Startled the desert over Africa ! "

An impossible combination, and one that well-nigh ruins, for the writer at least, what is otherwise a distinguished piece of work. One is impishly impelled to say " Africay " ! As a particularly felicitous example of approximate rhymes here are the first two stanzas of Miss Millay's " Autumn Chant ":

> " Now the autumn shudders
> In the rose's root.
> Far and wide the ladders
> Lean among the fruit.

Now the autumn clambers
  Up the trellised frame,
And the rose remembers
  The dust from whence it came."

I am not so sure of Masefield's *tells* and *else*, but accept the following :

" The breath I breathed, the brook, the flower, the grass,
  Were her, her word, her beauty, all she was,"

and bespeak approval for all these from Keats : *zone—down ; leash—mesh ; eyes—peonies ; shames—Thames ; thorns—fawns ; owl—soul.*

If charged with an inadmissible rhyme a master's defence would be similar, no doubt, to Galli Curci's when criticized for flatting. It is said that when the complaints became too annoying her manager expostulated, and the diva flashed back, " Can't they put up with that when I give them so much besides ? " There is pith in this. But minor minstrels, who have not such an overplus of wealth to bestow, do well to be punctilious and to make what they offer as finished, as free of faults, as possible. They should study sound relations much and earnestly in order to achieve subtle effects of harmony, a sort of verbal counterpoint. They should be patient enough, fastidious enough, to change a line or recast an entire stanza once a pair of rhymes has been refused a licence by that rigid referee, which, it is to be hoped, resides with each of us. It is a literary crime to force incompatible wedlock upon two perfectly good parts of speech—each competent to lead a useful and happy life elsewhere. JULIA BOYNTON GREEN

TO CERTAIN PEOPLE

FALSE modesty and reticence you utterly detest,
Your frocks are only shoulder-straps, you bare the manly chest,
You ask me to your parties and you're always very kind,
But the most exciting topics are the ones we leave behind.

I said " a prayer had helped me," the silence could be felt,
But some-one mentioned birth-control, and ice began to melt.
" Is God or Man omnipotent ? What happens when we die ?
I should value your opinion, but you put the question by."

It is not lack of interest, nor is it lack of brain,
It is not lack of courtesy, I ought to think again.

Perhaps you are conventional. The fashion of a day
Will always be tyrannical, no matter what you say.

The times and manners alter, but to me it's rather odd
To talk about aperients and draw the line at God.

MARY C. DENNE.

DYNAMICS OF AMERICAN POETRY: XLV

WHAT did Socrates mean by the pronouncement " Beauty is a short lived tyranny " ? From the cradle to the grave and reaching far beyond and into the realm of dreams leads Beauty. Perhaps Blackstone answers Socrates when he says, " Every wanton and causeless restraint of the will of the subject, whether practised by a monarch, a nobility, or a popular assembly, is a degree of tyranny." But this is not the Beauty we mean.

Barbara Young's new book just published by The Paebar Company, *I Go A-Walking and Other Poems*, is testament to the deathless flame of beauty. The title poem is the first we turn to. It is a favourite of Mrs. Theodore Roosevelt's. Eleven stanzas carry us to recognition of a credo for life. The first and second stanzas set the pace :

Why, where have you been ?
They said to me,
The road and the sky
And the poplar tree.

Oh, I've been there
In the house, I said,
Minding the children,
And making bread.

. . . . .

But don't you remember ?
They said to me,
The sky and the road
And the white birch tree.

. . . . .

And if you will wait,
I will come again,
When my lass is grown,
And my lads are men.

Since one should not quote from a sonnet, we will ask space enough to give you two fine sonnets.

GIVE ME A STAFF LIKE YOURS

Give me a staff like yours, and let me wear
A coarse rough garment, and go out with you
Upon the road, into the darkness too,
Into the tempest. And I shall not care
For weariness nor hunger nor the cold,
Nor cry for the soft comfort of a bed
That my slight body may be comforted.
Let us forget I am of woman mould,
And go as comrades to the road's far turning.
Then when we come to where a door stands wide,
And a hearth flames and candlelight is burning,
We will go in ; and soft and tender-eyed
I will braid down the strands of my dark hair,
And we will fold us in love's raiment there.

WHEN THIS BRIGHT DAY

When this bright day shapes to a shadowy close,
This road to some long crag of sudden flight
Wherefrom I shall take off into the night,
Dropping these five frail senses as the rose
Sheds her light petals on the rusty grass—

I shall be very curious and gay
Like a young child let out of school to play.
And without hindrance I shall turn and pass

Beyond the seven portals of the tombed,
And call without a voice, without a sound,
Above the dusty cavern, many-roomed,
Wherein the earth-worn pilgrim may be found
Resting an aeon from his body's care—
And you will answer on the breathless air !

There is something of Sara Teasdale in Barbara Young's brave and beautiful singing—there is something of Emily Dickinson and surely Barbara Young makes the third in this starry group, of American singing.

Lonesome Water (Harper & Bros., New York) by Roy Helton is a collection of some hundred ballads and folk songs of the Kentucky hills. They tell of feuds and ill-starred loves, of witch-women and mountain charms. The volume is illustrated with the author's own black and white drawings, which express something of the inherent beauty of the verse. " Lonesome Water," which is the first poem in the book, is charming. The first, third and fifth verses we give :

Drank lonesome water
Weren't but a tad then
Up in a laurel thick
Digging for sang ;
Came on a place where
The stones was holler ;
Something below them
Tinkled and rang.

Tweren't no tame water
I knowed in a minute ;
Must a been laying there
Projecting round
Since winter went home ;
Must a laid like a cushion,
Where the feet of the blossoms
Was tucked in the ground.

I'd drunk lonesome water,
I knowed in a minute :
Never larnt nothing
From then till to-day ;
Nothing worth larning,
Nothing worth knowing.
I'm bound to the hills
And I can't get away.

From a long poem called " The Eve of May," there follow five delightful verses :

Oh, the moon was ridin' higher
Than the steeples of the poplars,
And the evenin' it was Sunday,
But to-morrow would be May,

When I ranted down to Sandy
From a skyvee in the mountains
And I bruk the Fourth Commandment
And I sung my soul away.

Oh, I sent a shaft of singin'
Round the tiltin' varge of April,
I shook the livin' timbers
And I heared the echoes roll;
I gathered all the winter
In a poke of heathen music
And ranted on regardless
Of the damage to my soul.

Then I held my arms around her,
And her skin was soft as blossoms,
(I knowed she war a witch gal,
But I knowed too late to care.)
And I lowed I war the night wind
With my hands across her shoulders
And I lowed I war the moonlight
With my fingers in her hair.

A field of trompen blossoms;
A mist acrost the valley;
(Oh, the evening it was Sunday
When I sung my soul away.)
And the hill was bare and gauntsome,
And gauntsome war the shadows;
The sky above the poplar tops
Was empty with the day.

Oh, I knowed she war a witch gal,
But I knowed too late to matter;
I knowed I'd lost salvation,
But I knowed too late to care,
When I memorized the words she whispered
Slipping off to silence,
And that plumb, dead lovely music
And the moonlight on her hair.

ALICE HUNT BARTLETT.

For those who can enjoy a film about cowboys and the Wild West, and who will believe in the traditional bandit with "eyes like an Eastern night," who ride "devil-faced" horses and smell of "honey-bees and the rich wild flowers of the South," *Beau Bandit*, by Rosamond M. Woods (Houghton Pub. Co., 2s. 6d.), a rollicking story of outlawry and shooting and treachery, holds a perennial attraction. The cinema plot, the cinema clichés are here—and here is the dramatic appeal of the cinema, its gusto and its facile but intoxicating charm. And, as in the case of the cinema, criticism only comes after the story is finished.

HUSH AND HEAR

HUSH now and let the *soft* sounds press
Upon your quiet consciousness

Walk out alone in some fresh dawn
Stripped prancing as a leprechaun

Wind down a hill and hear the prattle
Where sprigs of brown weeds crack and rattle

Hear long-held wooden cricket notes
And plaints from blood-warm sparrow throats,

Inside a vine of grape and laurel
Catch, light, the footfall of a squirrel

And out of bowers in the bushes
Mark the gossip of the thrushes

Then, coming to the water's edge,
Pause, listen to the whispering sedge
And where the shore-line slowly swirls
Just hear the bright bay brush her curls !

Again the wiry, nuded trees
Stretch languorous to the sun's warm pleas

Along the shore the green snakes lie
Responding to the sun's winked eye

And when the wavelet's dance and shout
The bashful turtle's head looks out

While dreamless oysters haply bake
Unanxious that they'll never wake,

Extemporaneous rainbow flashes
Tell where a bluefish leaps and splashes,

A littoral duck, with feathered pelf,
Is prattling dryly to herself,

And, where the warm bay drinks the spring,
Now hear the dancing pebbles ring—
And listen to the crane's great wing !

Ah, we who storm and stalk and sneer,
Who scream aloud to hide our fear—
Sometimes it's good to hush and hear !

LOKER RALEY.

THE REJUVENATION OF MR. YEATS.

LIKE M. Valery in France and Rilke[1] in Germany, Mr. Yeats has succeeded in exciting and holding the admiration of both the younger and the older generation of readers. His new volume *The Winding Stair* (Macmillan, 6s. net), will reinforce his position. We have often seen, in recent years, the spectacle of our elder poets writing exercises in the manner of their youthful poems and publishing verse which, though it used the rhythms and the vocabulary which they had established, was derived from no genuine poetic apprehension. Senator Yeats has never fallen into this academism : he has continued to advance, and has attempted to write poems only at those moments when he was aware of such an advance and gain in comprehension. A poet who can advance in this way, after the first few years of adult life, must necessarily be concerned with intellectual and moral interests; and in the poetry of W. B. Yeats the sensibility is made to serve philosophy and ethics. This was the method of Dante, Milton, Shakespeare, and by it an organization is attained far higher than that of the isolated lyrics.

Because we know that W. B. Yeats is a careful craftsman, using words and images not only for their sensuous appeal but also because of their value as strict metaphor, we can accept from him the simplest of images :

I broke my heart in two
So hard I struck.
What matter? for I know
That out of rock,
Out of a desolate source,
Love leaps upon its course.

And again, from the same sequence (first published in a limited edition as *Words for Music Perhaps*) :

Banners choke the sky ;
Men at arms tread ;
Armoured horses neigh
Where the great battle was
In the narrow pass :
All things remain in God.

Here we remember not only the legends of Roncesvalles and Marathon (" 400 yeres after the battaile there foughten, there was heard the naying of horses, and the incountring of souldiours as it were fighting every night ") we suddenly are shown a new meaning in those legends : the battle has been and cannot ever cease : *All things remain in God.* And we may remember too " that they which of purpose came to heare these things could hear nothing, but those that by chaunce came that way, heard it very sensibly."

When a good poet refers for a moment to such a legend, he does so not merely to heighten the effect of his poem, but also to give back to the legend and the symbol something of the effect which in course of time it had lost. W. B. Yeats is such a poet, and we have here discussed only one minor aspect of his work, but that work deserves the attention of all who claim to read contemporary poetry, and those who wish to arrive at a conscious understanding of the technique might study these poems in conjunction with those of Laura Riding and Ezra Pound, to both of whom Mr. Yeats is indebted and both of whom are indebted to Mr. Yeats. It is pleasant to find Mr. Yeats, in a note, commending that neglected, but not truly negligible, poet, Mr. F. Pearce Sturm, whose *Eternal Helen* is still obtainable from Messrs. Blackwell.

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[1] See Prof. Olivero's article, " The Spiritual Landscape of Rainer M. Rilke " in the January 1930 POETRY REVIEW.

A.E.'s Bewildering Avatars

It is highly significant that when a man sets his imagination to work on a supernatural being, or attempts to portray a god, how poor and ineffectual is the creature he conjures up. A.E. can write of scenery in a manner almost unequalled by any other (*The Avatars*, Macmillan). Sentences catch at the mind and remain therein, treasured, as " The sea was a waste of quivering light," and many others too numerous to quote. But his Avatars, gods returned to earth, Aodh and Aoife, touch not a chord of the human hearts. Light emanates from them, ethereal music follows their steps, but the sole effect they appear to have upon human beings is to cause them to dance. The persons who discuss the weary world and the Avatars, do not dance, however, the painter, the poet, the sculptor and old Conaire, they are probably too busy talking. But if dancing is the road to the divine, then must Salome have been nearer to heaven than John the Baptist. We recall how a schoolboy wrote that " John the Baptist was beheaded because he *would* dance with Herodias' daughter " ; the lad evidently did not consider dancing as one of the beatitudes. The artist is enraptured because he sees (in the mountain solitudes) a vision of " swirling draperies, flushed faces, loosened and rippling hair, the glint of a white arm, a gleaming neck, the dance of lovely feet, all sun-flecked," which sounds like the description of a Dionysian feast. To him the mountain is ever " fame-fringed," and he sees " gigantic forms which seemed shaped from some burnished and exquisite fire." Such creatures have no possible interest for us personally : they are on the same plane as Shelley's boat with a moonstone prow, nor do we understand by what strange alchemy you can " burnish " fire. The young Avatar, Aodh, also sees " a figure thrice the height of mortals, a body gleaming as if made of golden and silver airs," and comes to where " there rose unto the blue night a mighty and many-coloured palace, its pillars, walls and towers all luminous opal enwrought with precious fires and carven over with mythic forms." (What are " precious fires " ?) A carpenter's humble shop in Nazareth holds more potent awe than this theatrical transformation scene of a luminous opal palace.

But putting these fantastic visions aside, there is much in the book that is worth remembering. The author inveighs against the mechanical age in which he considers we are now imprisoned—" the demon of the mechanical began to dominate the cities of the Iron Age—no song sounded over labour, for the machine chanted its iron dronings by day and by night, and the sorcery made men to forget the soul had once been as illuminated as nature " ;—" I think that freedom is what the soul most needs, for here it is slave to such baubles of comfort or praise or profit " ; " We have lived through too many empires. Is there any mood of the heart told even by the great masters of literature which is not stale to us ? Even from human love the enchantment is gone." Back to Nature is his cry, and to individual creation of all work, for " Men are never nearer to the gods or more partakers of their ecstasy than when they are creative."

This is true and yet the inventor of some great engine can claim to be creative, and in the past the cities have produced more artists than the sparsely inhabited places of the earth, however magnificent in Nature's beauty. And when to the loveliness of " wooded valley and long lakes " and " flame-fringed " mountains, is added opal-walled palaces, and tall " gleaming people with long purple hair," the reader becomes merely bored, and Aodh and Aoife have very little meaning for him. It is wearisome to read of Aodh's mane of golden hair streaming back like a lion's from his brow ; and Aoife's address to the " dark crowd " is as feeble a peroration as can well be. A.E. follows devoutly the old Greek belief that beauty of the body indicates a beautiful perfection of soul. But what a host of splendid, bodily men and exquisitely lovely women rise out the past and present utterly to confute that idea !

As Blake said of Milton, that his best work was when writing of Satan, so A.E. is at his most convincing when he interprets the doubts of the strong man who has lived more or less an evil life in the city. We meet this man on equal ground, not because we have been very evil, but because he speaks as a man, and not as an Avatar with a golden mane.

SHAKESPEARE THE DRAMATIST

Three new books on Shakespeare appear this autumn, each treating an old subject from a new and different angle. *Art and Artifice in Shakespeare*, by E. E. Stoll (Cambridge University Press, 7s. 6d.) treats of Shakespeare the playwright. Dr. Stoll, Professor of English in the University of Minnesota, is concerned with an analysis of Shakespeare's plays (especially of *Othello*, *Macbeth* and *Hamlet*) from a strictly dramatic point of view. His objection to the " psychological " or " literal " types of criticism is due to a realization of their inconsistency. " The trouble with Shakespeare criticism . . . is that it has been prompted and guided by the spirit of literalism. The play has been thought to be a psychological document, not primarily a play, a structure, both interdependent and independent, the parts mutually and sufficiently supporting and explaining each other; and the characters have been taken for the separable copies of reality." This sort of wrong-headedness among the critics has led, he thinks, to the creating and consequent explaining-away of difficulties in reality non-existent. " How much finer in the poet, and more satisfying to the imagination, that the characters, one and all, should thus be deftly transported into another world, and made subject to the high and all-prevailing purpose of a tragic illusion; and that the play should be, not a transcript of fact, but . . . of the poet's sense of fact." Dr. Stoll makes his points with an assurance that is based on thorough and precise scholarship; his slightly heavy and involved manner of writing, however, tends occasionally to obscure rather than illuminate the course of his argument.

Mr. G. B. Harrison in his book *Shakespeare at Work* (Routledge, 10s. 6d.) is concerned with Shakespeare as the man of his time, or rather as the man about town, for the author only re-traces the years in London until the death of Elizabeth. The book is written in the semi-biography, semi-fiction style, which is convenient for the author, who can present probabilities as facts, and convenient for the reader, who can enjoy a clear-cut narrative, without being continually pulled up short by the tiresome gaps that records and tradition alike fail to bridge. Mr. Harrison writes pleasantly, moving at his ease among the streets and playhouses of Elizabethan London. There is charm without flimsiness in this book.

The third book about Shakespeare by Carola Oman (Hodder & Stoughton, 8s. 6d.) is a novel proper, dealing with Shakespeare from several aspects, but particularly from the point of view of a family man, deeply involved in domestic responsibilities. *The Best of his Family* is an extremely good novel, well-written in a full-blooded colourful manner (the conversation is particularly racy and animated), moving with impetus and excitement from the first chapter, and becoming increasingly interesting as the author traces Shakespeare's development from a boy at home, through the years in London, to Stratford again. One remarkability of this book, which, rather surprisingly, perhaps, adds to rather than detracts from the interest, is that it is the Shakespeare family as a whole, rather than Shakespeare alone, who fill the centre of the canvas. This clearly-conceived and excellently executed piece of work leaves in the mind an appropriate and attractive impression of jostle and colour.

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Perhaps one of the most striking changes in literary judgment in the last few years has been the acceptance of John Donne and Gerard Manley Hopkins as major poets. Both poets seemed " difficult " and

" harsh " to their contemporaries, and only in recent years have critics pointed out that this harshness of sound and complexity of meaning was an effect deliberately intended, and without which the poet could not produce the effects of doubt, and hesitation, and conflicting impulse at which he aimed. Perhaps there are still readers who doubt whether such involved psychological states can provide the subject matter of poetry : to them, the answer is that those who have intensely experienced such states *need* the corresponding poetry as a means of reorganizing thought and feeling. To express a condition is to master it.

To Professor Grierson is due the credit for drawing our attention to Donne. His critical edition of the poems published by the Oxford University Press in 1912 first compelled that attention : his *Metaphysical Poets* showed the relation of Donne to his contemporaries and immediate successors. Since Southey, Donne had been neglected by publishers, and the *Poems of John Donne*, now reprinted from Professor Grierson's earlier edition, by the Oxford University Press (3s. 6d. net) is the first clear, scholarly, cheap edition of the text. Those who essay to understand contemporary poetry such as that of Mr. Empson could not do better than buy this volume as an aid to study : no more authoritative edition is likely to appear for many years.

Miss E. E. Phare (Mrs. Austin Duncan-Jones) has written a short book on *The Poetry of Gerard Manley Hopkins*, in which she considers him not as an odd and obscure poet who wrote only for the few, but as a major poet who could sometimes claim for himself " the extreme of popular style " and whose work was never affectedly obscure nor deliberately esoteric. Miss E. E. Batho's larger book, *The Later Wordsworth*, comes from the same firm. Recent biographers of Wordsworth have dealt in greater detail and with greater sympathy with the first half of his life than with the last. Miss Batho's study reveals his real opinions in the latter half of his life ; how far they were in agreement with or in contradiction to those of the earlier half ; the impression which he made upon his contemporaries ; and his attitude towards them.

Claude Colleer Abbott is a poet of considerable distinction and, as his edition of *Durley* showed, he is a learned and painstaking editor. Consequently his *Early Mediaeval French Lyrics* (Constable, 12s. 6d.) is a book of considerable value. He has made a judicious selection from the poems of Conon de Bethune, Chatelain de Coucy, Gace Brule and other secular poets of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. These lyrics are, for the most part, simple and charming ; they are concerned, almost invariably, with one of two themes : the delights of illicit love, and those of alcoholic liquor. As Mr. Abbott, in a very able Introduction, says, they lack the depth of some of the early English lyrics :

for hire loue y earke an care,
for hire loue y droupne and dare,
for hire loue my blisse is bare,
and al ich waxe won;
for hire loue in slep y slake,
for hire loue al nyht ich wake,
for hire loue mournyng y make
more then eny mon,

but it is absurd to search in one literature for the qualities which make another. Sometimes, in the English as well as the French, we find the freshness which is "that in the heart of a small boy when before breakfast on a sunshiny April day he finds his first thrush's egg in a dewy budded hedge."

Mr. Abbott prints his neat English versions opposite the originals. Often he is felicitous: sometimes he misses an ambiguity:

Renaus et s'amie
Chevanche par un pre:
tote mist chevanche
jusq'au jor eler.

becomes:

Renaut and his lover
Ride on through a mead.
All the night go riding
Till the dawn speed.

The difficulty of a translator in this kind (and perhaps only Mr. Pound has succeeded) is that the original is clearly a language someone once spoke and used for everyday purposes, talking to serving-maids, and swineherds and great lords and men-at-arms, whilst the idiom produced by a more-or-less literal translation into contemporary English is a language never heard on land or sea. You must either translate into early English, or start again to build up a contemporary poem on the same theme. But to find a modern equivalent for the naïve defiance of convention in this poem would be difficult, and Mr. Abbott is most successful when he translates into an idiom which derives from an earlier English speech:

Let be, husband, so you have no despite,
To-morrow you and my own love to-night.
I bid you speak of it no little word;
Husband, let be, nor go away nor stir.

You shall have me the morn, for short the night
When my lover will do me his delight:
Husband, let be, so you have no despite,
To-morrow you and my own love to-night.

Mr. Abbott would not, perhaps, claim for his translations that they were anything more than pleasant cribs, therefore he will forgive the reader preferring the order and development of the original :

> La nuis est courte, a par mains me rares,
> qont mes amis ara fuit sen deduit.
> Soufres, maris, et si ne vous anuit :
> demain m'ares et mes amis anuit.

Mr. W. H. Davies has followed up his charming volume *My Birds*, by another, *My Garden* (Cape, 3s. 6d.) though in reality the titles are interchangeable. The endearing quality of his egoism and his delicious whimsies are set down sometimes in verse and sometimes in prose. Where the same fancy is expressed in both ways one realizes the superiority of verse as his medium. For instance, in " On a Cold Day " we are told :

> The thrush, ashamed of his thin ribs, has blown
> His feathers out, to make himself look fat. . . . .

and we share the delusion, but when in the ensuing chapter Mr. Davies says : " I have had my attention drawn to a very strange sight. It is of a thrush who is really hungry and thin, but who has now loosened all his feathers, and looks more like a big fat baby bird than a slim parent. In fact, when I first saw this bird, I had the impression that he was a young chicken that had strayed from a farmyard and was now lost. However it did not take me long to make up my mind that this fluffy, big-looking bird was really no other than the small thin thrush who attended my table every day and never missed a meal. But why did he blow his feathers out like that ? Was he ashamed of his thin body, and wanted to look fat and prosperous ? And was it a wise thing to do, seeing that the cold winds had a better chance to search his bones," we are obliged to admit some weakness in the remark, for we know of the layer of fixed air under the raised feathers giving extra warmth.

Rachel Field (*Points East*, Macmillan, 10s.) can tell an excellent story in verse, containing an element of unexplainable mystery, in a half-colloquial, picturesque language that smacks of seafaring. Unguessed poetry frequently breaks through many passages and is confirmed in the lovely lyrics, " This is the Place " and " The Old Pasture."

Christopher Drewry (*Proud Horns*, Macmillan, 7s. 6d.) writes with a fine economy and a settled gloom of

> Life's hot intolerable distress.
> And death's incredible cold imminence,

but he gives pleasure through his craftsmanship.

Teresa Hooley (*New Poems*, Cape, 3s. 6d.) writes on many themes with clarity, and with especial frankness of her own sex. To women of the domineering type she is stingingly intolerant, but to " Eve " and her limitations :

Mysterious slave of Eros, forever she suffers,
By destiny cursed and exalted, degraded and blest,

she has written a poem of strange beauty.

Strange Battalion (Dent, 3s. 6d.) is written by a girl under twenty, Mary Lang. She writes with both emotion and talent, and yet one wishes she could have waited for publication until she had realized the wisdom of keeping a strong personal note in the background rather than in the forefront of her poems.

The most impressive poem in Charles Gower's *Cordis Flamma* (Watts and Co., 3s. 6d.) is " Gallipoli " which is a fine tribute to his countrymen. The sonnets on Australia are also good. Yet his verse suffers from the defects of its own virtues—a strong imaginative language that leaps from thought to illustration and on to new thought but neglects to provide the connecting bridge by which the reader can follow.

It is easy to prophesy that *Cuckoo Calling, A Book of Verse for Young People* (Methuen, 7s. 6d.) will find a Christmas welcome in almost every home in England. The difficulty will be to find another present, so suitable, to be offered to any member of the family, not forgetting the Acrimonious Aunt, for whom Mr. E. V. Rieu shows such tender solicitude in " The Castaways." Here, after hinting darkly at the misdoings of his three heroes, a beetle, a bat and a bee, the author suddenly decides not to continue his story :

I would like to, but feel that I can't
When I think of your elderly aunt
How surprised she would be !
How disgusted with me !
That settles the matter ; I shan't.

In spite of this he does, however, relent so far as to disclose the horrid fact that they were given to the nefarious practice of gum drinking.

For human and zoological foibles of all kinds Mr. Rieu has, personally, a certain tolerance. He seems even to have a sympathetic feeling for those two arch-villains Mr. Hall and Mr. Knight as they form their plot for the undoing of their pupils. This sinister plan is brought about by the ingenuity of Mr. Hall who adds a *b* to *x* and *y* in such a way as to make algebra impossible to solve. To this device Mr. Knight adds a touch of genius, which his colleague receives with rapture :

" A brilliant stroke," said Hall, and added *z* to either side ;
Then looked at his accomplice with a flush of happy pride.
And Knight he winked at Hall (a very pardonable lapse)
And they printed off the algebra and sold it to the chaps.

The family favourite, on the other hand, will undoubtedly be Peter and Percival, and here even the Acrimonious Aunt cannot fail to weaken before their innocent philosophy.

Peter and Percival, two simple penguin poets, arrive to pay their addresses to the Queen of the Penguins, but she turns them away with instructions to go off and discover the Pole, and also to employ their time on the way in polishing up their style. Wounded in their deepest feelings both as poets and lovers, Peter and Percy set out disconsolately to do their lady's bidding. But before they have gone very far they fall into a conversation which entirely alters their arrangements. " I would like," Percival tentatively begins,

" I would like to be loyal, but since we are banished
My love for Her Majesty seems to have vanished,
I used to be charmed by her perfume and paint,
But just at the moment—" said Peter, " You aint."

After deliberating over the matter for some time they decide instead of continuing their Polar expedition to set up a reformed and Republican state in the middle of an icy plain. Here they proceed to live happily ever afterwards :

They danced their delight in the star-spangled weather,
Peter and Percival, birds of a feather ;
And the Awful Aurora with shimmering hands
Shook her curtain out over the ice-covered lands.

A magnificent example of the law of compensation, and a lesson to lovelorn mortals. The illustrations of this enchanting book are by Violet M. Guy, and are altogether delightful.

Among the many books on versification received from time to time, *Elements of English Verse*, by W. H. Stephens (Macmillan, 2s. 6d.) is an outstandingly interesting one. This is not a book for the novice, nor for the poet himself so much as for the teachers of verse-speaking and the verse critic, because it is these who are concerned with the laws that make the laws they teach. Mr. Stephens has a new system for measuring verse " founded on the fact that English verse is made primarily in units of spans of thought and emotion, expressed in various types of rhythmic sequences unifying into a dominant measure of feet of sound." He shows how these spans and feet largely coincide and sometimes " crossdraw," giving that pleasurable variety that good poets use by native genius and with which others " irk " their lines. Yet in all he accepts the ear as the final judge of fitness. On the other qualities in poetry itself he has equally illuminating things to say : " In listening to poetry we expect to find not merely lines of melodies in sequence, but also chords of harmonies in vertical incidences . . . we are told that Inspiration comes from time to time to transcend the powers of Reason, and to transfuse verse with that subtle cast of emotion and thought which at once effects a change ' into something new and strange '—into Poetry." What a pity there is that slip in the quotation !

Dilectissimo by Nina Cust (Macmillan, 1s.) is a collection of about twenty poems, of various forms, loosely linked together by two recurrent emotions, exultant love and passionate grief. The author expresses hauntingly the long-drawn-out hopelessness of despair :

> O piteous body of mine so strangely long a-dying,
> How many hours or days or years have you been lonely lying ?
> How many dreams of living have worn the deadness thin ?
> How many death-like wakings have walled the anguish in ?

and she succeeds too, although less often, in sounding a true note of exultation :

> You lift me so that I am more than I,
> You lift me so that none shall throne so high !

Not always, however, is the emotion sustained throughout the poem. Where Mrs. Cust begins well she does not always end well, and a suggestion of the forced and merely sentimental tends to mar her work. The last stanza but one in " O Palace Desolate " is perhaps the most effective in the poem. The concluding quatrain is a sad drop :

> How long ago ? How long ago ?
> The sick hours drone and drowse . . .
> My heart is creeping, creeping slow
> Through memory's sheeted house.

Because of this tendency to unevenness the shorter poems are on the whole the best. In the poem beginning " Silence is all about, solemn and still and bright " or in " Even as a leaf," Mrs. Cust successfully intensifies the emotion, line by line, to an effective climax, while a smoother technique matches the sustained note. At such moments the author is genuinely appealing and convincing, and these are the poems which ring true and which remain in the mind after sentimentality has been forgotten.

In reading Mrs. Woolf's new work, *Flush, A Biography* (Hogarth Press, 7s. 6d.), we cannot help being filled with a hope that she is preparing for us a Life of Elizabeth Barrett and that this book is merely a promise of better things to come, in the sense perhaps that a film " trailer " prepares a cinematograph for a full house next week. We are given, for example, provocative glimpses of Flush's mistress lying upon her sofa encircled by busts, medicine-bottles and bric--à brac, an excellent close-up of Robert Browning making his first appearance in the Barrett household, and a stirring picture of nineteenth-century Wimpole Street in which our blood is curdled by a kidnapping scene in the accepted Hollywood tradition. At the same time we are continually being disappointed by the fact that the shots are too short and, above all, that the film is a silent one.

Mrs. Woolf is hampered throughout by the limits she has imposed upon herself by her subject. Whether this is done with malicious intent or not it is hard to say, but it is at any rate difficult not to suspect her of deliberately teasing her readers, ninety-nine per cent. of whom cannot fail to buy and read her book in the belief that they will discover something fresh about the Barrett family. Instead, we are constantly being reminded that we are being offered not a portrait of Elizabeth nor even new enlightenment on the controversial problem of her father, but the biography of a dog. For all her skill the authoress has not been able to transfer our interest from Flush's associates to Flush himself. With the best will in the world our attention cannot help wandering from the hearthrug to the sofa on which Elizabeth Barrett is lying and from the sofa to the door which may at any moment open to admit Robert Browning, a fact which Mrs. Woolf appears to imply is hardly worthy of our consideration. If she fails to do so, however, her readers can hardly be blamed for supposing that her failure was intentional.

Four Days Wonder by A. A. Milne (Methuen, 7s. 6d.) is an admirable example of the Poet as Novelist. All the charming characteristics of Mr. Milne's delightful verse are found in this whimsical story, subtly satirical, with a chuckle and a gurgle on every page. *The Enchanted Village* (Macmillan, 7s. 6d.) marks a further stage in the retreat from poetry of Mr. Edward Shanks which we noticed in our last issue, but it does not show an advance on the *Queer Street* records. Yet as a tale of a somewhat mad, hot summer night, it has some surprising touches and may be read as an actual record of modern young people affected by the recent tropical weather, thereby being very much up-to-date.

A greater book is *Vanessa*, the conclusion of Mr. Walpole's Herries chronicle (Macmillan, 10s. 6d.)—an epic which will be read for its easy style and penetrating insight as well as for its being a social history of an important period long after the ordinary novel of to-day has passed into limbo. It is of particular interest to POETRY REVIEWers inasmuch as among the celebrities gathered together at famous houses in London are a number associated with ourselves, including the late Editor of THE POETRY REVIEW who appears on several occasions, and towards the end the uneasy Benjie takes down " Casson's *Wise Kings of Borrowdale*, an old friend of his that he had not seen for many a year but had found to-day in Chaplin's bookshop," which was published by the present Editor of THE POETRY REVIEW, the author Casson himself being a frequent contributor to THE POETRY REVIEW and actually appearing in the present issue. With the convincing character drawing there is some magnificent descriptive writing and the spirit of the future as well as of the past broods sympathetically and hopefully over the whole book, the conclusion of which may be summed up in Casson's lines quoted by Mr. Walpole as read by the now aged Benjie, who remained faithful to his ghosts and to his beloved Cumberland,

> I bid ye mourn not for the death of beauty.
> For, though the Springtide fades from Cumberland,

Her streams and tarns, there is eternal spring
In heaven. And, on my island where I live,
I dream that heaven is very like this land,
Mountains and lakes and rivers undecaying,
And simple woodlands and wild cherry flowers.
At least I know no better. But weep not,
For, though this land is but the shadow of heaven,
It yet is heaven's shadow.

The significance of words is a matter of constant concern to the poet and user of language. Archbishop Trench was perhaps the first to point out that " many a single word is itself a concentrated poem, having stores of poetical thought and imagery laid up in it " and that he who discovers a new word to define more clearly a new thought or gives a new significance to an old word and raises it thereby to a higher plane becomes actually a poet in the old exact sense, that is a maker. We are finding among the many poems offered to THE POETRY REVIEW an increasing number with words as their subject, some of which are now emerging into print quite irrespective of any intentional selection on this account and we are realizing more and more that a word is a creative thing and that the first verse of St. John's Gospel has an extraordinary and profound meaning. We are all in search of the Word, the open sesame to a vaster and deeper state of being. It is probably a recognition of this mystery of the artist that impelled H. M. Tomlinson to write *The Snows of Helicon* (Heinemann, 7s. 6d.)—an artist's effort that is not fully and clearly accomplished, a revolt against a machine-controlled world and the unrestrained uses of material power to the rejection of the joyous but elusive spirit of beauty that should bring design and order to a chaotic world and control the forces which modern man has released.

" All that I have urged," says Mr. F. L. Lucas in the Warton Lecture (*The Criticism of Poetry*, Humphrey Milford, 1s.) " comes merely to this—that the criticism of poetry, whether professional or our own, though true interpretation be its first aim, without a keen sense of values remains but as blind sloth upon the Tree of Knowledge ; that those values are not mere matters of subjective caprice . . . " Mr. Lucas is here echoing the more closely argued reasoning of Samuel Johnson, Matthew Arnold and T. S. Eliot, but unhappily his particular scale of values *is* highly subjective. A reasoned statement of the academic critics' case against the mere classical school would have been welcome, but Mr. Lucas, in his academic isolation, fails to understand their problems. He pleads for a new paganism, and urges that the poet should ignore the evil in the world or invest it with " a touch of that nobility of suffering, which Shakespeare in his gracious wisdom gave even to Caliban." The plea deserves to be heard : but Mr. Lucas does not understand that it is precisely that quality of understanding which some readers admire in the work which Mr. Lucas condemns. His excellent intentions are frustrated by his condemnation of certain contemporary critics and poets (like a garrulous charwoman he frequently " mentions no names "). His sententious dicta are unexceptionable: his interpretations lamentable. His remarks on style are just; the style he most prefers is rhetoric. " They were wiser than they knew," " Rupert Brooke, silent now in Scyros," " Where now are the intelligentsias of Russia and of Germany ? " spiced with journalese and hackneyed quotation. In short the lecture is justly calculated to persuade an elderly audience that they are very fine fellows after all, despite the muddled world.

Two anthologies of more than passing interest are a feature of the autumn publishing. *The English Galaxy* (Dent, 7s. 6d.) is a collection of shorter poems chosen by Mr. Gerald Bullett, a poet and literary man of dependable taste. Yet this selection, beginning with anonymous singers before Chaucer and ending with five lyrics by the exclusive A. E. Housman, and largely supplementing instead of repeating other general anthologies inasmuch as it claims to include some three hundred poems not to be found in the latter, is more tendacious than is apparent at the first appreciative glance. Many years ago we came across in a Wensleydale churchyard a gravestone to " an honest attorney." We have less reason now to wonder at this epitaph's implication, and we have found an honest anthology a still greater rarity. Certainly Mr. Bullett disarms any application of this innuendo to himself. One of his guiding rules has been " to steer a discreet course between blind deference to traditional opinion and an overweening confidence in my own personal taste," considering, however, that he would be guilty of dishonesty, and a singularly barren dishonesty at that, if he carried deference so far as to include any poem to whose merits he himself was insensible. Hence we find the obvious omissions of any poems by Sir William Watson, Mr. Rudyard Kipling and Mr. G. K. Chesterton, although they were as " firmly established in the practice of their art before the turn of the century " as Mr. Housman, Mr. W. B. Yeats, and Mrs. Katharine Tynan, who are included. While Browning is represented by one poem (the ubiquitous " Home Thoughts from abroad ") and a bit, Swinburne by the same amount, and Thomas Hardy by three, the curiously fashionable G. Manley Hopkins, beloved by the B.B.C., is drawn on for four obscurantist pieces, and nine poems each are credited to John Clare and Robert Bridges.

Mr. Louis Untermeyer shows less apparent personal partiality and less of the influence of contemporary prejudice in his *Albatross Book of Living Verse* (Collins 5s.), a most useful and handy anthology of English and American Poetry from the thirteenth century to the present day, very neatly and judiciously selected and arranged with brief centennial introductions and a particularly well classified index of forms and types and a further addendum defining the chief poetic designs and devices, altogether an admirable piece of book-making in which the publishers have collaborated by providing an attractive format and a beautiful Baskerville type. We have not time and space now to examine Mr. Untermeyer's selections and methods as they deserve but must note that he amplifies other standard anthologies by including a very representative selection of work done during the last thirty years which he is good enough to recognize have been especially rich in poetry, particularly in America on account of the renaissance which dates from the beginning of this century. In consequence this book of living verse—that is of living poetry irrespective of the age in which it was produced—is more comprehensive and complete than other similar anthologies with a claim on serious consideration. Mr. Untermeyer does include four pieces by G. M. Hopkins, and six by Mr. Kipling and one by Sir William Watson, two by G. K. Chesterton and two by W. E. Henley, while the exigent A. E. Housman, who allowed seven pieces by him to appear in the American edition, has carefully excluded himself from this European edition.

New collected editions have appeared this autumn of the poems of two great living Englishmen who do not figure in the English Galaxy—Mr. G. K. Chesterton and Mr. Rudyard Kipling. Both the *Collected Poems of G. K. Chesterton* (Methuen, 7s. 6d.) and the *Rudyard Kipling Inclusive Verse* 1885–1932 (Hodder & Stoughton, 25s.), contain a number of hitherto unpublished poems which show that neither master has lost his command of the exact word and the telling phrase and the music of song. Chesterton may be light, fantastical and paradoxical, but he is never banal—there is always a personal and arresting idea behind his persiflage and undoubtedly he cuts deeper than any other modern writer except Rudyard Kipling and they both have the merit of being readable. Kipling's new poems are a running commentary, very penetrating and incisive, on contemporary events and whatever his subject he gets nearer to the heart of the common man than to-day's favourites will ever do. He remains the word ringer and heart wringer, the master of the living word where other poems are dead, the poet laureate of ourselves and every individual foible and weakness and affection.

Books on vocal interpretation multiply and are a significant sign of the greater attention now paid to speech. Broadcasting is admittedly responsible for much of this literary activity. The *Psychology of Effective Speaking* by T. H. Pear (Kegan Paul, 6s.) and Hilda Matheson's monograph on *Broadcasting* in the Home University Library (Thornton Butterworth, 2s. 6d.), both deal with speech from the broadcaster's standpoint and both are analytical without being very helpful as to the practice of effective speaking. Mr. Pear asks with us " why should not the younger generation learn to speak, and learn in the schools, . . . effective speaking should be given as much attention as to music, drama or cricket." He recognizes what is unfortunately commonly ignored by the best of us, that it is an important psychological fact that a person who would never knowingly allow a loose phrase of his to be printed will emit them prodigally from his mouth. There seems to be in public speaking a social fashion comparable to the " Alexandra limp " of two generations ago. Hence the great scope for investigation and direction such as Mr. Pear analyses. Naturally Miss Matheson finds that the chief concern of broadcasting is the voice and that its most pervasive and most powerful effects are seen not in music but in speech, again enforcing Mr. Pear's dicta and our long-persisted-in point of view. It looks very much as if The Poetry Society's policy was at last being respected and coming into its own. Miss Matheson after pointing out the necessity for a deliberate policy on speech training on a national scale by wireless and by other means, deals with the poetry voice and confirms our own experience by stating that whatever its use may be on stage or platform the " elocution " voice has no place at the microphone and in consequence the choice of poetry readers remains one of the most difficult tasks in broadcasting. Miss Matheson tells us that " Dislike and irritation is invariably expressed of all extremes in reading—whether it be the overproduced, over-expressionistic elocutionist, or the reader who believes in rigidly intoning his lines. Practically no criticism is received from any quarter when the reader possesses a voice whose texture is in itself beautiful, who reads simply, without mannerisms, and without peculiarities of accent, who does not obtrude his own personality, and who gives due importance to structure, rhythm, cadence, meaning and feeling. Such readers are to be found in the proportion of one in a hundred of those who present themselves as would-be poetry readers." We have learned from experience that the microphone requires a special voice technique and that even those who might be considered to have good poetry voices are not effective readers because of the lack of experience and of proper direction which would enable them to adjust trained and well-produced voices and while Miss Matheson, with other authorities, appears to deprecate personality in the voice she asks why is it that some people with voices like corn-crakes or like sparrows can hold the breathless attention of a vast audience ? It is apparently on account of the personality behind the voice, or else why are these people not compelled to give a further value to their apparently excellent material by voice-training ? This applies of course to many people engaged as lecturers and speakers outside the broadcasting sphere. As Professor Pear points out, they lose enormously by their inadequate presentation of excellent material, by their neglect of their speaking voice.

Mr. Rex Whistler is particularly well suited as an illustrator to *The Lord Fish* by Walter de la Mare (Faber & Faber, 10s. 6d.). In particular, his picture of John arriving at the house of the enchanted fish maiden is all that a child could desire in its suggestion of romance and mystery. *The Lord Fish* is perhaps the best of this series of long short stories, and here Mr. de la Mare's sense of poetry appears to even better advantage in his prose than in his verse. He gives the freshness of a spring morning in a few sentences in which he describes the beginning of John's adventure so that we can smell the dampness of the earth and the scent of summer flowers.

" Then blackbird to blackbird sounded the alarm. . . . Never even in his dreams had he been in a place so strange to him as this. . . . The foxgloves and bracken of its low hills and hollows showed bright green where the sunshine struck through the great forest trees. Else, so dense with leaves were their branches that for the most part there was only an emerald twilight beneath the boughs. And deep silence dwelt there."

In *A Penny a Day* he is less successful, for his story, deliberately written in the manner of Grimm, loses the originality of style without which his work is disappointing and sometimes even trite. He returns for a while to his own medium in *The Jacket* to relapse again in *Dick in the Beanstalk*, where he again appears to be experimenting. Yet, if none of these stories and those that accompany them are equal to his masterpiece *Seaton's Aunt*, or his exquisite unsatisfying tale *The Riddle* both of which contain his peculiar charm, his gift for weaving spells round his readers and of falling himself under their enchantment, still even so this book will be appreciated by those who have half forgotten and perhaps tried vainly to recapture the delicate and elusive impressions of their childhood.

Messrs. Macmillan have produced in one handsome volume Rudyard Kipling's enchanting *Mowgli Stories* (6s.) handsomely illustrated by Stuart Tresilian—a truly delightful Christmas present of jungle lore, depicting Mowgli's friends, Baloo the Bear, Bagheera the black panther, Mother and Father Wolf and the " brethren " and many other animals as more than human creatures to those who do not fear them. Only a universal poet is able to enter into the universal feelings of man and beast. Mr. Kipling, who once exhorted his readers not to " give their hearts to a dog to tear," makes all his animals so touchingly real that few can read his poems or stories without emotion. " The Spring Running," telling of Mowgli's farewell to the Jungle where he has been reared by the wolves and his other friends, is one of the most touchingly beautiful stories ever written about animals. Love is the keynote of all the stories, love of the animals for their adopted man-child—love is the last word he hears as he leaves the Jungle—" Good hunting on a new trail, Master of the Jungle! Remember, Bagheera loved thee! "

The enthusiasm of the Old Vic has been diverted momentarily from Shakespeare, and we are somewhat surprised by the reception accorded a morbid Russian play that cannot stand comparison with the humanity and gaiety and delight of Shakespeare, but happily we are able to look forward to productions of *Henry VIII* and *Measure for Measure*, which will occupy the attention of the talented Old Vic company, strengthened by Charles Laughton, Flora Robson and Athene Seyler, during November and December at the Old Vic and Sadlers Wells.

The old Poets' Corner has been improved upon by the *Sunday Referee* in which a feature is now made of comments and arguments on new verse contributed by readers,—a section admirably conducted by Victor Neuberg in which many POETRY REVIEWERS are appearing with credit.

The literary standard of Christmas cards and calendars has been very much improved in recent years and some charming examples in both verse and picture and both light and serious are put out by Millar and Lang, and will be a joy to all fortunate enough to receive them as seasonal greetings.

" Peter Simple " of *The Morning Post* thinks that happy memories of days spent in South Africa will be stirred by these lines from Mr. F. Carey Slater, a Wynberg member of THE POETRY SOCIETY, the author of *Drought*, " the book of verse which gained him his place in the ranks of modern poets " :

Hot noon-tide,
And the shackled sun
Lies sleeping under the pine-trees,
Like a caged leopard ;

Glad and cool,
The blue hydrangeas
Stream through tiny sun-plains
And pigmy hills of shadow ;

Soft and slow,
The swaying agapanthus
Beat blue chimes
Upon the brazen gong of sunlight ;

And all around
Hidden ring-doves
Scatter a blue rain of song
Upon the brown waste of silence.

Mr. ADAM K. MYRON writes from Wolvehoek, Orange Free State : For the last two years I have been in receipt of THE POETRY REVIEW from Johannesburg. What pleasure and profit I derive from its pages, words fail to express. I look for its coming as one looks for springtime—this is mid-winter with us—all the fullness and beauty of it; especially now since seasons have been so adverse. No rainfall, no crops, no veld, and stock dying all over the Free State. For comfort I turn to the muses, who are still " not dead."

Mrs. Laurenson of Dunedin, New Zealand, in renewing her membership subscription, adds " I am very proud to be a member of The Poetry Society, and am only sorry that I cannot participate in all those activities that I read about. The verse speaking interests me greatly, as at present, I am, I think, the only champion of the art of verse speaking in Dunedin although I am striving to interest as many others as possible, and find THE POETRY REVIEW of unlimited value, as well as encouragement in my task of showing people that acting and verse speaking are two separate arts. I think that I was the only member of The Poetry Society in New Zealand to welcome Dame Sybil Thorndike, certainly the member living furthest south."

ACCIDENTAL DEATH

THE streets are shrouded in the pale mist's magic
the street lamps wake like blossoms at the touch
of spring. Around the mountain's sleeping feet
they gleam like spangles on her garment's hem.

Like some weird phantom tearing through the dusk
the brilliant headlights of a passing car.
The young lover walking in the streets
blinded like moth goes down beneath the wheels.

It was so dark you could not see the mud
under the gossamer covering of snow ;
it was so dark that no one saw the blood
given by a lover to redeem his dreams.

KARL VAN BEEK.

EVENING

EVENING—
And liquid sunshine ;
Up in the mountains,
A rainbow.

Hills—
And a crystal lake,
" Heavenly Dragon "[1]
Is drinking.

Wings—
In a flutter of water ;
Dipping for radiance
The Birds.

Stems—
In a mirror of splendour ;
Bending for brilliance
The Flowers.

MARGARET NICOLSON.

[1] Chinese for Rainbow.

IN MEMORIAM: A.H.H.

THE centenary of the death of Arthur Henry Hallam was fittingly commemorated by a special celebration in the parish church at Clevedon on September 15th—an admirably arranged simple service which impressed the crowded congregation. An effective feature of the harmonious order of service was the dignified, sympathetic, rhythmical reading of appropriate stanzas from *In Memoriam* by Mr. Christopher Chapman. The Master of the Temple, the Rev. Canon S. C. Carpenter, gave an address on *In Memoriam* in the course of which he described how the poem represented very accurately the intellectual stress of the nineteenth century, and showed the poet's recovery of a personal belief in immortality. Science at that time was pressing religion very hard and faith seemed difficult to many people—much more difficult than it was now. Scientists to-day were providing a sort of background, in which it was very much easier for religion to thrive than it was in the last century. Science was then new, young and very confident, and did not hesitate to utter negative conclusions. The present-day science was much more modest. It stuck to its lasts and assisted religion to carry on. Tennyson felt all those difficulties very acutely and gradually worked his way up to the Christian faith. Canon Carpenter pointed out that the poem was published ten years before Darwin's *Origin of Species*, which made the poet's understanding of evolution the more remarkable, and he quoted an interesting tribute by Professor Henry Sidgwick, whom he described as a very representative nineteenth-century man. " We had shaken off what Carlyle called the Hebrew old clothes," Prof. Sidgwick said, " and we found ourselves face to face with atheistic science. All our faith in God and immortality was in the air. Now *In Memoriam* impressed on me the conviction that what he calls the man in men will not acquiesce in a godless world." The final solution, Canon Carpenter pointed out, was summed up in the words, " Love is and was my Lord and King."

The A.H.H. Centenary, although one of the most pregnant of literary anniversaries, did not obtain much popular notice. Very few newspapers referred to it, the outstanding exceptions being, of course, *The Times* in which a very appropriate special article and a hitherto unpublished portrait of Hallam by Spedding appeared, and the *Birmingham Post*, the *Scotsman*, and the *Church of England Newspaper* (by Herbert L. Hallam). The Rev. Philip W. Lilley in his comprehensive and judicious *Scotsman* article, pointed out that we know from many testimonies of notable men and women what a blank had been created in their lives by the removal of one whose saintliness of character was as manifest as his brilliant intellectual gifts. Dean Alford, Lord Houghton, and Mrs. Fanny Kemble all unite in testifying to the nobility and charm of Hallam's many-sided personality.

Tennyson was not betrayed into exaggerating his friend's moral and mental calibre, or the spiritual influence which he wielded over all who came in contact with him. The picture which he gives of Hallam in *In Memoriam* is but the bare truth; it has not been even idealized. In the brief Memoir which serves as Preface to his son's *Remains*—written with great restraint of language—Hallam's father said: " Arthur seemed to tread the earth as a spirit from some better world." In referring to the fact that Hallam's philosophical and speculative gifts were in advance of his gifts as a poet, Dr. John Brown in his beautiful essay says: " He was on his way to God." Gladstone wrote: " It would be easy to show what in the varied forms of human excellence he might, had life been granted to him, have accomplished; much more difficult to point the finger and to say, ' This he never could have done.' Enough remains from among his early efforts to accredit whatever mournful witness may now be borne of him."

The truth is that, apart altogether from his extraordinary versatility. Hallam possessed unusual charm and winsomeness, which not only won the intellectual, but also drew little children to place their hands confidingly in his.

With respect to *In Memoriam* Mr. Lilley insists that Tennyson stood alone among the poets of his generation, in this respect at least, that he had absorbed in a wonderful way the modern consciousness, and, sympathetically sensing the trend of the thought of his day, had the courage to write a poem in full view of all that. He had been interested in science from his school days. Professor Henry Sidgwick afterwards wrote to Hallam Tennyson, the poet's son, " During those years (the 'sixties) we were absorbed in struggling for freedom of thought in the trammels of an historical religion, and perhaps what we sympathized with most in *In Memoriam* at this time, and apart from the personal feeling, was the defence of honest doubt, and generally the ' forward movement of thought.' "

It is, therefore, to Tennyson's credit that he made these views articulate in a manner which had the effect of steadying thoughtful, earnest people whose faith had been disturbed by the revolutionary ideas that were in the air, especially those affecting the relation of the physical sciences to the question of Revelation. He was the first to realize how religious conviction was likely to be affected by the impact of a physical as distinct from a philosophical theory of Evolution, and he did so ten years before the disquieting influences had begun to be fully felt: for it will be remembered it was not till 1859 that Darwin's *Origin of Species* was published. If Tennyson's position can be accurately summed up as one of " guarded liberalism," yet, at the same time, it is admitted that " it created a bridge upon which men could stand, if uncomfortably, until the threatening flood of materialism had begun to subside."

Mr. Lilley discusses the attitude of to-day towards *In Memoriam* and after pointing out its perpetual appeal as a work of art, he refers to a second, certainly a much smaller, class of readers to whom *In*

Memoriam has become sacred because of its inner message of hope and healing*. Tennyson looked into his own heart and wrote; accordingly, the personal passion which throbs through it can be felt by all whose lives have been impoverished by the loss of friends. *In Memoriam* at its best rings true. Tennyson himself describes his work as "the way of the soul." It is, in truth, a parable of the soul of man in travail through the night of pain to the dawn of a serene spiritual hope. It gives a noble expression to the perennial and insatiable longings of the heart of man, when confronted with the great mystery of death, his desire to pierce within the veil, and know something of the life beyond that is hid from mortal eyes. From this viewpoint *In Memoriam* is a manual of consolation and a balm for hurt minds. From the point of view of Christian dogmatics, it may not, perhaps, pass muster, for it is vague at times and semi-mystical and even perhaps occultist in its philosophy; nonetheless, in his great threnody Tennyson has given stumbling men and women a foothold when their steps had slipped and were well-nigh gone in the midst of life's tempestuous night.

[*Not a much smaller class, surely. *The Times* during the war pointed out that poetry had resumed its ancient place again as guide, consoler, comforter, inspirer, when *In Memoriam* was being more read than any other poem and had become the daily reading of thousands of families.—Ed.]

The Council of The Poetry Society has endorsed and become responsible for the Appeal made by the Vicar of Clevedon to the many thousands who had been influenced and consoled by *In Memoriam* to send a small donation towards the cost of substituting a decorated window for the single plain glass window now in the Hallam Memorial Chapel. It is obvious that the Appeal is a national rather than a local and parochial matter, *In Memoriam* being the priceless possession of the whole of the English-speaking world, its immortal value to humanity being proved daily and particularly in the anxious years of the War when it was read more than any other poem or piece of literature.

The Poetry Society is preparing a statement with regard to this Fund, which will be as much a memorial to *In Memoriam* as to A.H.H. and for which no more suitable place could be found than above the vault in which Hallam's body was laid in January 1834. In consequence, we ask readers to support a Shilling Fund which, in the words of Dr. Alexander Darling, J.P., of Edinburgh, who has sent five guineas in advance of the public appeal, "should testify to the greater appreciation of what I regard as a matchless poem. Personally I don't think there is anything outside Holy Writ comparable with *In Memoriam.*" The subscriptions already received include 5s. from Miss J. P. Nott (Bristol), one guinea from the Rev. Philip W. Lilley (Minister of Rhu), and £1 from Captain Butler-Thwing (Guards Club).

We regret to have to record the death of Charles Alva Lane, a Vice-President and Life Member of The Poetry Society. Mr. Lane, who was the founder of a famous firm of organ builders of Alliance, Ohio, will be remembered as the donor of two of our special verse premiums, the second of which was awarded to Mrs. Iërne Ormsby for the notable poem published in last year's May-June issue. He himself was a sonneteer in addition to having a very keen appreciation of poetry and its value and influence. His was a very noble character with a genius for friendship, and many friends, including some made within The Poetry Society, feel very much poorer by his passing.

THE ORGAN-BUILDER.

(*Charles Alva Lane of Alliance, Ohio. Died July 26th*, 1933.)

You knew the music of a wider sphere ;
A grander, sweeter harmony than ours,
That claimed the consecration of your powers
And held you far above all mortal fear.
To Church and College, through each passing year,
You gave divinest of created dowers ;
Not less majestic than the spires and towers
That climb to Heaven to bring its echoes near !

And now you journey whence the music came
That made your life a song, and kept your heart
As pure and true as deepest organ tone.
The angels will not need to ask your name,
Knowing by rote the beauty of your part
In nature's symphony, blent with their own.

IËRNE ORMSBY.

* * * *

Miss Janet Squire, of Hoddesdon, Herts, will forgive us for quoting the following charming letter to the General Secretary, which we commend to all members :

" Although I am just leaving England for some time, it is without the slightest hesitation that I renew my subscription to The Poetry Society. I have only been a member since last October, but already I have derived the greatest benefits from the criticism of my poems and the very greatest pleasure from the meetings I have been able to attend at the Kensington Centre and from the reading of THE POETRY REVIEW.

" I wish more people knew about this wonderful 'fellowship.' I am sure there are a great number of people who, like myself before I joined, do not know enough or nearly enough about poetry and have no-one to tell them.

" So I wish every success to The Poetry Society and though I shall be unable to attend meetings, shall look forward to the splendid REVIEW."

THE POETS' FELLOWSHIP:

THE PREMIUM EDITOR'S REPORT

The entry has been a large one, necessitating the exclusion of some very interesting poems from the Awards, which are as follows:—

1. D. H. Silver, for her poem "Lais" and two other very good lyrics.
2. H. E. Holland, for "The Invisible Foe."
3. Clarice M. Covell, for the fine narrative poem "The Magic Mirror."
4. Janet Urquhart, for "October, Cotswold Country."
5. G. E. Merrick, for the merit of her four contributions as a whole, even though no single one of these poems might merit an award.

Among the contributors "Highly Commended" especial mention must be made of Mrs. John Kerteszffy for "Beneath the Wings of Death," Ken Ethridge for his narrative poem or Ballad of "Hangman's Bane," E. O. Measor's "Hampton Court," and Mary C. Denne's satirical poem "To Certain People."

Highly Commended:

Elizabeth Alden, Haddenham;
Lilian Bird, Kettering;
Herbert Burkitt, London, E.;
T. E. Casson, Newton-le-Willows;
Mary C. Denne, Sandhurst;
Ken Ethridge, Ammanford;
V. M. Flower, Salisbury;
Alma Gates, Redhill;
(Mrs.) John Kerteszffy, Budapest;
E. O. Measor, London, S.W.;
Redcliffe McKie, Brighton;
Charles G. Mortimer, Iver;
Margaret Ormiston, London;
V. Rawnsley, Anacapri;
Beresford Richards, Alberta;
Helen B. G. Sutherland, Newport, Fife;
M. Stewart, Bromley, Kent;
Cyril G. Taylor, Northallerton;
Juliet Young, Vevey.

Commended:

Vera Arlett, Worthing;
Irene Bell, Stockton-on-Tees;
Enid Bradley, Wisbech;
Ethel S. Broughton, Derby;
A. T. Brown, London, S.W.;
Mary C. Carrington, Virginia;
Alice Collinge, Bolton;
I. Davies, Monmouth;
William Frankland, Burnley;
A. Golland, Liverpool;
Doreen Goodwin, London, W.;
P. Goodman, Belvedere;
E. Hall Haines, London, W.;
Capel Hall, London, W.;
M. E. Hughes, Beckenham;
Melfin W. Jones, Cardiff;
J. Kirton, Dover;
Phyllis Lubbock, Eastbourne;
G. Minshull, Croydon;
Ïërne Ormsby, Thurgoland;
Nancy Pollok, Glasgow;
S. W. Powell, Salisbury;
Joyce V. Reed, Wimbledon;
E. M. Russell, Caterham;
E. M. Sadler, Beaconsfield;
H. M. Slade, Ramsgate;
A. M. B. Smith, Wallasey;
Zuella Sterling, New Hampshire;
M. Sterne, Manchester;
Mollie Tatum, Capel St. Mary;
A. Tutcher, London, N.W.;
Terence White, London, W.;
Elise Fellowes White, Maine;
George Vanson, New York;
N. C. Yendell, Exeter.

The usual premium of £2 for the best poem or poems submitted to the Premium Editor during the month (without limitation of subject) is continued. Not more than four lyrics or one long poem should be submitted. MSS. should be addressed to " The Premium Editor, THE POETRY REVIEW Office, 36 Russell Square, London, W.C.1," before December 1st, accompanied by stamped addressed envelope, and if criticism is desired, 2s. 6d. (For a more detailed postal criticism, 5s. should be sent.) Contributors must observe the elementary rule that name and address of writer must appear on each M.S.

Poetry Reviewers are invited to enter for the Poetry Society of Georgia's Seymour prize of 25 dollars for a poem about the sea or shipping. All MSS must be typewritten on one side of the paper only. Only one poem not exceeding 100 lines by any competitor may be entered. The name of the prize for which the poem is submitted must be clearly written on the MS. This is most important, and failure to comply disqualifies entries thus submitted. No entry shall be signed. The signature of the author inclosed in a separate envelope on which is written the title of the entry must accompany the MS. All work submitted must be original. None is eligible which has been previously published, nor can any material be submitted elsewhere pending the decision of the judges. All prize winning material becomes the property of the Poetry Society of Georgia. The Society shall have the exclusive right to publish or not to publish any or all such work in the Year Book, or under its imprint in any way that is deemed advisable. The authors shall retain the right to reprint such prize winning material with due acknowledgment to the Poetry Society of Georgia. Entries must reach the Chairman of the Committee on Prize Awards, Mrs. Craig Barrow, 17 West McDonough Street, Savannah, Georgia, U.S.A., by January 15th, and the awards will be announced in THE POETRY REVIEW as soon as possible thereafter.

IS ROBINSON JEFFERS EXCUSABLE?

(*To the Editor of* THE POETRY REVIEW.)

SIR,—A further commendation of the work of Robinson Jeffers compels me to send you a protest written after reading " A Magnificent Misanthrope " in last year's May-June number of THE POETRY REVIEW, to ask you and its readers how much, and how far poetic genius is justified in using lascivious and obscene material and yet be acclaimed, as Robinson Jeffers is—" a poet whose work is the outstanding literary event of a century " ?

The author of the article, acknowledges that his poetry is " no fit pabulum for the adolescent," but offers in excuse, what she calls " the sloughs of lasciviousness in the Bible, and its frank delineations of unspeakable shame and licence."

The books of the Old Testament were written with a purpose, and a beneficent and mighty one—that of drawing, with unflinching truth, the hatefulness of sin and its inevitable punishment. The poems of Jeffers are not inspired with any purpose to uplift mankind, but are written with a supreme and scornful indifference as to the evil and subtle influence they will exert on those who read them. They are, in spite of their many lines of real beauty, an emanation from an impure mind and clouded soul; whose outlook upon the mighty verities of existence, is as narrow and isolated as the tower he has built as the symbol of his aloofness.

The writer of this article continues—" Christ and Venus rub elbows within his covers, and God himself is summoned to justify and approve of assignation. Could audacity go further? " Is blasphemy to be regarded as merely delightful " audacity " to those critics and readers who are not only applauding this man's work and exulting in the " thrill " his impurity and infidelity give them, but who are tearing down, as far as may be, the foundations of those things that are " pure and lovely, and of good report," upon which the divine temple of poetry is built?

She says: " his pages reek with unbridled passion, incest, suicide, arson, idiocy, and lawlessness of all sorts; but these miasmatic areas are redeemed by passages of fresh indescribable beauty." Webster's definition of " miasmatic " is, " to pollute; infectious germs, making the air noxious "; and no passages of " fresh, indescribable beauty " can purify or nullify, the contaminated atmosphere of this jungle of immorality!

And what is the essence of Jeffer's philosophy, and where does it lead to? That love is, in all its relations, merely carnal, and that man himself will disappear " from a moribund earth, with the debacle of the entire planetary system in universal dissolution."

We have recently experienced the greatest and most bloody war the world has ever known; and to-day lust, crime, intemperance and infidelity, are triumphing as never before, and it is to the men of Jeffers' calibre we may look as the subtle and insidious force that is debasing and degrading our civilization. Truly, " where there is no vision the people perish," and " out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh."

Portland, Oregon. MARY ALETHEA WOODWARD.

PROFESSOR BANERJEE, DR. WOOD AND MR. W. B. NICHOLS.

(*To the Editor*, THE POETRY REVIEW.)

DEAR SIR,—As an old member of the Poetry Society of London (and at present President of the Calcutta Centre of that Society) I am naturally an appreciating reader of our Society's organ of which, again, I am always proud.

I feel deep gratitude to Dr. Frederick T. Wood for his very kind mention of my article on Robert Bridges (which appeared in the *Calcutta Review*, June to October, 1930) at page 285 of the July-August issue of THE POETRY REVIEW. It really encourages one to find that an article written by an Indian on English poetry thus attracts the notice of able critics like Dr. Wood. May I convey, through you, my grateful thanks to the writer of the article for his reference to me? The footnote (to page 285), however, requires a slight correction, for page 419 should, it seems to me, be page 417. This, of course, by the way.

Permit me next to quote Dr. Wood's remark on my performance. "The comparison," says Dr. Wood, "which Professor Banerjee has drawn with parts of *The Testament of Beauty* is an ambitious one—too ambitious perhaps; but etc."

Possibly, I have to confess to "ambition." At any rate, Mr· Wallace B. Nichols will bear me out that in reply to his first letter to me (then a perfect stranger to him), dated London, November 11th, 1931, written by him on "learning from the current[1] issue of THE POETRY REVIEW that I had been kind enough to give a 'reading' from his poetry," I said that I had "discovered"[2] him here in India far in anticipation of any recognition of his poetry at this end so far away from London. For that letter of Mr. Nichols ended in a query as to "how I came into contact with his work so far away. Was it from a review, or was it recommended to me by any one?"

No, I did not wait for any recommendations or reviews to "discover" a rising poet in Mr. Nichols whom, as I then thought, the world would not for long leave in obscurity.

I feel decidedly happy that to-day Mr. Nichols figures in THE POETRY REVIEW as one of "Three More Modern Poets." Is it pardonable in a man to feel a sort of personal satisfaction, if not triumph, in this?

To return to my "ambitious comparison." If Dr. Wood purposes to accuse me of audacity or rashness, I regret I cannot tamely submit to such a chastisement. I yet hope, however, he is less severe. In that view, I am prepared to accept with gratitude his friendly frown. Dr. Wood is anything but dogmatic—he adds a "perhaps." And there is much virtue in "perhaps" as, according to Shakespeare, in "if." Moreover, "Mr. Nichols's poem (*Prometheus in Piccadilly*)," Dr. Wood generously admits, "cannot be lightly dismissed." That is, of course, not to say that Professor Banerjee is not "ambitious."

I must be brief. So I can, for the present, only humbly draw Dr. Wood's special attention (and that of POETRY REVIEW readers in general) to the following references. Personally, I am averse from literary controversies. So, I would, if Dr. Wood is so good as to permit me to do that, write to him direct in more detail about my position in respect of this matter.

(1) The place assigned by Mr. Nichols in his *Prometheus* to Beauty (and Love and Friendship) in the *entire* scheme of his piece. *Vide*, for instance, Part IV, iv, eleventh stasimon (specially st. 8, ll. 2–4) page 129 of *P.P.*; last speech of Prometheus, p. 141, Section XVII opening lines p. 153; also end of paragraph 2 at page 154. End of paragraph

3, p. 155, and paragraph 6, at pp. 156–157. For Love (and Friendship); *cf.* page 170 and Love and Beauty end of paragraph 2 at page 166 (sec. V, 1) and ll. 15–18 and 24–25 at page 168 (of III).

(2) The idea so dominant, both in *P.P.* and *Testament of Beauty*, of Life's *ascent* (to God). *Vide P.P.* St. 1, stasimon 15, sec. V, p. 178.

(3) The place assigned to Love gradually developing *stage by stage* and then serving as a Jacob's ladder: page 177.

Here I should definitely mention that Mr. Nichols suggests a clear difference (with Dr. Bridges) at p. 174; yet I make bold to hold that here too his poem SUGGESTS something to *The Testament of Beauty*.

In this connection I want to *emphasize* that I pointed out to Mr. Nichols himself that I discovered in him a good deal of Indian Vedantism[2] which, to my mind, differentiated him from Dr. Bridges. Let me also, please, refer to p. 173 where Mr. Nichols, as distinguished from Dr. Bridges, is somewhat anti-Bergsonian.

Still the first speech of Zeus (opening lines of page 179, sec. VI) should be compared by conscientious readers with the *Testament of Beauty* (*passim*).

May not, again, Dr. Bridges' "RING" be said, without damnable ambition, to have been suggested (not anticipated) by Mr. Nichols' "circle of activity"? The idea of ascent is, besides, so pointedly dominant in both the poems.

I do not (nor ever did) forget the Vedantic (differentiating) note in the last stanza of sec. VIII, pp. 180–181 of *P.P.* Yet, unconverted as it is my misfortune to remain, to me sec. IX (pp. 181–182) is *suggestively* significant with regard to my contention.

I have, it will be noted, strictly confined myself to "Parts IV (The Trumpet of Beauty) and V (The Triumph of God)" of Mr. Nichols' *Prometheus in Piccadilly* (1927) which were specifically mentioned by me in the June number of *The Calcutta Review* (p. 417) and to which evidently Dr. Wood refers (at p. 285 of THE POETRY REVIEW, July–August issue).

I would not lengthen needlessly this correspondence, which, I am afraid, is already too long—but not needlessly so. But may I not simply make a bare mention of (1) the *debate* element in *P.P.*, p. 171, which Mr. Nichols shares with his formidable rival (if indeed that is the word) and of (2) the predominance even in *P.P.* of the *principle* of Evolution (as at pp. 172–73 and 176 of *P.P.*)?

Finally, I would earnestly request Dr. Wood and our judges (if any) to bear in mind that I never said nor meant to say that Mr. Nichols *influenced* Dr. Bridges or, worse still, Dr. Bridges *borrowed* from Mr. Nichols. In fact, my guess, afterwards[3] confirmed by Mr. Nichols himself, even then was that *Promethus in Piccadilly* might have been altogether unknown (and unseen) to the great poet-laureate.

If I had inferred "influence" or "borrowing," I certainly would have honestly said as much straight away. I don't yet know if I was wrong even in using the word "*suggested*" (page 517, *Calcutta Review*, June, 1930) to which evidently Dr. Wood takes exception. Then possibly my English was imperfect. No wonder. After all it is and must ever remain to me a foreign tongue.

If opportunity is available, I propose to make a detailed comparative study of both the poems concerned with a view to explain, if not justify, how I was led to say what I did say.—Yours sincerely,

Calcutta, *August 10th*, 1933. JAYGOPAL BANERJEE,
(Professor, Calcutta University).

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[1] Reports and Announcements (contd. from page xii), POETRY REVIEW for November, 1931 (Vol. XXII, No. 6).

[2] I refer to Mr. Nichols' reply to my letter, dated London, December 19th, 1931, which is a fairly long letter on a number of points regarding himself, my estimate of his poetry, his place in England among English critics, my discovery of a deep Vedantic vein in him and his explanation as to how it could be so, etc.

[3] Letter of Mr. Nichols to me dated London, January 7th, 1932, in which I was assured thus : " I am pretty certain that Bridges had never *heard* of my own poem, much less read it ; the similarities, therefore, are all the more interesting and remarkable " (italics mine). I am obliged to make quotations from *private* letters and that for want of time without express permission from Mr. Nichols for which, I trust, he will forgive me.

CALIBAN IN VERSE.

(*To The Editor*, THE POETRY REVIEW.)

The arrival of THE POETRY REVIEW with its beautiful orange-tinted cover, is always an event. This time it has made two people very, very happy. Here, my poems are seldom accepted. The rule seems to be, in the words of the much esteemed Katherine Lee Bates, that " . . . all success is Nobleness," etc. etc., so that unless you are diligent, attend clubs, prayer-meetings, sewing circles, civic service societies, and the like—in short, unless you are standardized, you are not and never can be recognized as a Poet.

That seems to be the critical point of view among American women, according to my own experience. And when I see, as recently, the world's worst poem—utterly hopeless, given a prize by a State Federation of Women's Clubs, I wonder what is the use ! Here is an impertinence ! Please forgive it. I find the spirit and substance of THE POETRY REVIEW in every way uplifting—inspirational, perhaps ultra-refined and delicate. Mr. Chesterton demands strength—emotional power, and often, in these poems it is to be found. I, too, admire the masculine touch. Vigour and power in verse are rarely met with. I, being by no means typically feminine in my tastes, perhaps not ultra-refined, have a healthy love for the gruesome and ghostly and horrible. In the midst of such sweetness and light I would welcome an occasional thunder-cloud. Or a more poignant element of real, human tragedy.

The island, with Ariel and his attendant spirits is enchanting—delightful, yet I miss Caliban ! And if one should ask me why *I* myself do not write something virile, startling, harshly, roughly, magnificent and humorously *human*, I might quote Mr. Chesterton again, and say " Why, why, indeed ? "—Yours most gratefully, A Maine Contributor.

POETRY AND PROSE READING TESTS

The Council of The Poetry Society, to meet a growing and insistent demand, have instituted two definite reading tests—one for the reading of poetry, the other for the reading of metrical prose drawn from the Bible.

Experience based on the Rawnsley Medal Competition, the B.B.C. poetry readings and other experiments indicate the wide difference of technique and accomplishment between reading and speaking and justifies this development of the Examinations. The readings will be governed by the following regulations, which are provisional :

(1) The auditions may be held in conjunction with the general verse-speaking examinations or separate therefrom as occasion requires and the number of entries justifies.

(2) The Poetry Reading Examinations are limited to two classes—candidates of 18 years of age and over and candidates under 18.

(3) Candidates may enter for a Certificate and subsequently for an Honours Certificate, the entrance fee in each division to be 7s. 6d. and 10s. respectively.

If a candidate is awarded Honours on a Certificate entry the Honours Certificate may be claimed without further examination or test on the payment of 2s. 6d.

Candidates may enter on a subsequent or later occasion on the payment of half-fees.

(4) A Bronze Medal class may be instituted later on the requisition of teachers and candidates concerned.

(5) Candidates will be expected to read a set piece to be prepared in advance and to read a poem chosen by themselves to express their own interest and taste, and also to read a poem at sight if required.

(6) Candidates who obtain an Honours Certificate may describe themselves as *Readers of The Poetry Society* (*Incorporated*).

(7) The holding of an Honours Certificate or the Readers' Bronze Medal will become a qualification for entry for the Rawnsley Memorial Gold Medal.

II

For the Reading of Rhythmical Prose based on the Bible

(1) There shall be three classes, Juniors up to the age of 13, Seniors between 13 and 18, and Adults 18 and above.

(2) As for the Poetry Reading, entries will be received for a Certificate and an Honours Certificate in each division, the fees being : Juniors 2s. 6d. and 5s. respectively ; and for the Senior and Adult classes 7s. 6d. and 10s. respectively.

(3) The candidates will be expected to present a test piece, and junior and senior candidates to speak a short passage of not more than 12 verses chosen by themselves in advance. Candidates above 18 will be required to read a passage at sight.

(4) The first test pieces, which will remain in force until further notice, will be

(*a*) Juniors: Psalm 23.

(*b*) Seniors and Adults: Ecclesiastes 12, Verses 1–7 and 13 and 14. A special Bronze Medal examination for this section is under consideration.

* * *

Many readers are interested in plays—we receive frequent inquiries especially for plays suitable for schools' production—and will be glad to hear of The Theatre Bookshop, which is at the service of those who want to know what new plays have been published lately, what London successes are now available for amateurs, and what new books there are on stagecraft and production.

Mr. C. J. Arnell, as founder and former editor of *The Decachord*, has had a wide acquaintance with the work of novices at verse writing. Knowing their difficulties, he has published a book, *Art and Practice of Versification* (Sidney Lee) which is designed to help them. He stresses many points of prosody newly and clearly, but there are others of importance that he leaves in some confusion, as, for instance, the examples of different kinds of metre and rhyming patterns. But he urges writers to read and study hard, and of particular fitness is his final word, quoted from Ben Johnson: "He who would write a living line must sweat."

An esteemed authority on new verse assures us that "there are some remarkable lines in the sonnets by Winifred Gérin—particularly I think 'And for one best are many bitter Mays,' which seems to me to have the genuine Shakespearian touch, an imitation *almost* too good to be true! I do not accuse her of conscious imitation. It has the exact construction in every way, undertones, rhythm, metre and then the thought too—yet it is *not* Shakespeare's! It 'fits' the sonnet beautifully."

Many readers will endorse Mrs. Ormsby's assurance that The Poetry Society "has given me many years of intense pleasure and profit, and uncountable thrills time and again. It has also given me some of my most highly valued friends." This is a realization of one of the principal reasons animating the formation of the Society and in the course of years we have heard from other members who have found sympathetic and permanent friends through their association with The Poetry Society.

A member residing at Menton, A.M., France, writes: Times are admittedly hard, especially when one lives abroad on account of the exchange, but I would rather fare on bread and water than sacrifice my membership in The Poetry Society!

End of Vol. XXIV